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THE

SAVANNAS OF VARINAS.

TALES OF VENEZUELA.

PART II.

CONTAINING

THE SAVANNAS OF VARINAS.

Some books are lies frae end to end,
And mony a lie has ne'er been pen'd,—
But this that I am gaun to tell,
Is just as true's * * * * * *.

Death and Doctor Hornbook.

VOL III.

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1831.

293.

TALE II.

THE

SAVANNAS OF VARINAS.

CHAPTER I.

THE LLANEROS.—AN INROAD.

But yester-eve, so motionless around,
So mute was this wide plain, that not a sound
But the far torrent, or the locust bird
Hunting among the thickets could be heard;—
Yet hark! what discords now, of every kind,
Shouts, laughs, and screams are revelling in the wind
The neigh of cavalry,—
—an army nurs'd in victories
Here stands to crush the rebels.
Veiled Prophet of Khorassan.

THE inhabitants of the plains of Varínas will long remember the year 1818, as an epoch, during which the horrors invariably attending civil war, under any circumstances, were experienced by them with greater severity, than at any other period of the eventful revolution in Venezuela. The desolating struggles of the patriot and royalist parties, both of which contended for the mastery with the un-

relenting ferocity, that appears peculiarly to characterise conflicts between such nations as are descended from common ancestors, and speak the same language, had been hitherto confined, in a great measure, to the more populous and better cultivated parts of the country, in the vallies among the mountains. The broad extent of trackless savannas, termed by the natives "*Los Llanos*," which lie between the rivers Orinóco and Apuri, intersected by numerous deep and rapid streams, and partially inundated at the recurrence of every rainy season, offered nothing, to tempt invasion, more alluring than the wild bullocks and horses with which they abound.

The *Llanéros*,—or men of the savannas,—a simple and peaceful race, lived in separate families, each under one common head, after the manner of the Patriarchs of old. They occupied remote *hatos*, or farm-houses, usually situated many leagues apart from each other, for the convenience of the greater range of pasture, that was thereby afforded to their respective herds; as well as to avoid trespassing on their neighbours' limits, which would otherwise have been unavoidable in a country where inclosures, or even land-marks, are totally unknown. Occasions for strife between the herdsmen of the different families were, consequently, of extremely rare occurence; while the inexhaustible abundance of wild cattle, and the facility with which horses and cows could be at all times obtained, for the use and subsistence of the inhabitants, left no pretence for rivalry, nor temptation for any acts of aggression or violence. At the same time, it was evident

to a close observer, that the mildness of manners, for which the Llanéros of Varinas had become proverbial, arose from no deficiency of spirit. It was the natural consequence of the young men's living in constant intercourse with the elders of their own family; to whom they were accustomed to pay implicit obedience, and in whose presence their behaviour was habitually respectful and sedate.

Although usually styled and considered herdsmen, their habits and mode of life were in reality those of hunters; for the cattle, which constituted their sole wealth, being perfectly wild, the exertions requisite to collect a herd, and to keep it together in the neighbourhood of the farm-house, were necessarily violent and incessant. Constant exercise on horseback;—nights passed in watching the cattle, and in protecting the calves and colts from the attacks of the panther and jaguar;—and an acquired indifference to every extreme of weather;—all had already contributed to fit them for the equally toilsome profession of arms. No sooner, therefore, was the communication between the Llanos and the sea coast of Caraccas interrupted by war, so that their customary traffic in mules, hides, and tallow was at a stand, than they became restless, and impatient of this unusual inactivity. All who were capable of carrying a lance flocked, in crowds, to the standard of their countryman Jóse Antonio Päez, who had already distinguished himself by his bravery and success, as a Gefe de Guerilla; and who found little difficulty in disciplining such valuable recruits, and in rendering them efficient and respectable soldiers in the field.

The families of the Llanéros, which still remained in the farm-houses, although thus abandoned by the flower of their youth and middle-aged men, were, nevertheless, in no danger of suffering actual want. The old men and boys, who, much against their wishes, were left behind, were capable of amply providing for them, by singling out occasionally a wild heifer from the nearest herd, and having noosed it with the unerring *lazo*, bringing it in at their horse's tail as a supply for the hato. But the friends of those who had taken up arms felt the separation far more keenly, than would probably have been the case, if the country round them had been more populous. In their secluded mode of living, the absence of a single individual left a sensible blank in the family circle; and, in consequence of their almost insulated situation, little or no intelligence was likely to reach them concerning the events of a war, in which they began, for the first time, to take a deep and painful interest.

Bolívar had sustained a series of defeats, in the early part of this year, at La Puerta, Rincon de los Toros, and Ortiz; by which the patriot army had been greatly weakened, and compelled ultimately to retire from the province of Caraccas to the interior of Varínas. The Spanish General-in-chief, Don Pablo Morillo, was consequently induced to follow him into the Llanos, with a formidable force, in the confident expectation of being able to crush the remnant of the *insurgentes*, in one campaign, so effectually as to deter their leaders from again engaging in so hopeless a cause. As Bolívar was well aware that his army, exhausted by casualties

and sickness, and dispirited by repeated reverses, was incapable of offering any effectual resistance to the threatened attack, he determined on entrusting the defence of the plains to Pāez and his cavalry. He himself therefore withdrew with the remainder of the patriot troops, consisting of infantry and artillery, to the Indian missionary establishment of Los Capuchínos, on the opposite bank of the broad and rapid Orinoco.

The alarming report of the approaching Spanish inroad spread rapidly, among the small villages and plantations, on the banks of the rivers, which separate the plains from the mountainous districts. The inhabitants of these, most of whom were in some way connected with the patriots, and had therefore sufficient reason to dread the arrival of Morillo and his merciless band of invaders, fled precipitately to take refuge at the farms, in the interior of the savannas. Their arrival was hailed, as a joyful event, by the simple and hospitable Llanéras; who, delighted with such an unusual and unexpected acquisition of society, felt not the slightest apprehension that they themselves would shortly be compelled to fly before the scourge of war.

It was not until they received intelligence, that the fortified town of San Fernando on the Apúri, the only place of note in the Llanos, had been burned to the ground, that they could at all comprehend the possibility of an invading army penetrating as far as their remote habitations. A few among them had occasionally visited San Fernando, on the solemn festivals of the church;—as at Pascua de la Natividad and Pascua Florída;—and

had brought with them, on their return to their farms, such exalted notions of its strength and importance, that the report of its destruction was considered almost incredible. They were at length fully aroused from their dream of security, by the arrival at each farm-house of a few Llanéros from the army; whom Päez, with the paternal solicitude of a chieftain, had sent to warn their respective families of the urgent necessity that had arisen for their immediate emigration, as well as to assist in removing the aged and infirm into a more inaccessible part of the plains.

It was, indeed, full time to take this precaution; for columns of smoke could already be distinctly perceived in different parts of the horizon, ascending from the spots where their next neighbours' houses had stood. Various small parties of emigrants also began to make their appearance, traversing the savanna in the direction leading to the forests bordering the Orinóco, which were barely visible in some places towards the South; presenting, in this boundless expanse of uninterrupted level ground, precisely the same uncertain appearance, between cloud and land, so often witnessed at sea between the Tropics. These wanderers, as they halted for rest and refreshment, spread the alarm of the inroad which had actually commenced; and increased the general panic, by relating their narrow escapes from falling into the hands of the incensed Spaniards. Morillo, they said, had unexpectedly crossed the river Arăuco, at the pass of Merricúri; and was slowly advancing, with the avowed intention of chastising with exemplary

rigour the families of the Llanéros, from among whom such a formidable reinforcement had been lately supplied to the patriot cause.

The hato of El Merricúri, belonging to Silvestre Gomez, a wealthy Llanéro, as it was situated exactly at the pass of the Arãuco, by which Morillo had eluded Pãez's vigilance, and entered the savannas, was, of course, the first to be plundered and burned. The family had been awakened, about midnight, by the unusual sound of axes in the woods on the opposite bank; and could plainly see by the clear moonlight of summer, that a party of the enemy was busy constructing rafts on the sandy landing place. They could also distinctly hear the stifled murmur, which invariably denotes the neighbouring presence of a large body of men; and the occasional broken cry of the mules,—a note resembling the melancholy braying of the ass, combined with the more cheerful neigh of the horse; —as well as the various confused sounds caused by dismounting artillery and unloading baggage, convinced them that Morillo had selected this unguarded and little frequented pass for crossing the river.

Silvestre Gomez, and his eldest son Felipe, were at that moment absent from the farm; having joined Pãez's celebrated Guardia de Honor, some months before. The second son, a boy twelve years of age, who had been left at Merricúri to assist his mother, having previously caught and hastily saddled the few horses that happened to be grazing round the farm, rode full speed to the patriot camp at Caujarál, to carry Pãez intelligence of Morillo's suc-

ceasful manœuvre. The mother, and the remainder of her family, fled towards the hato of their kinsman Juan Gamarra, without having leisure to save a single article of property; except a few ponchos, or men's cloaks, in which the females and children were wrapped; and that treasure to a Llanéro, the family guitar.

The appearance of the fugitives at Gamarra's farm, in such grotesque equipments, and at such an unusually early hour, struck their cousins with unfeigned amazement. Paulíta Gomez and her children had rarely, if ever, been seen by them before, except on visits, in their best holiday apparel, and in all the gaiety of festive meetings. They now appeared before them, harrassed by fatigue, and pale with recent alarm; while the total disarrangement of their hair, (in which the Llanéras are usually scrupulously neat,) and general dishabille, excited surprise in all, and irrepressible laughter among the younger branches of both families; for the children looked forward with delight to the prospect of emigration, and could see nothing, in the whole affair, more terrible than in a masquerading frolic at Carnestolendas.

The first in the cavalcade was Juaníta Gomez, a young and lively Llanéra, wearing one of her elder brother's capotes, in lieu of a riding habit. This was the more indispensable, as she rode *à la ginéte*, (on a man's saddle) with the grandmother of the family behind her, on a pillion. The old lady was evidently more fretted at the thoughts of paying so unseasonable a morning visit, and appearing in public without her usual little ornaments of an-

tique finery, than grieved at the serious loss of farm and household property they had just sustained. She had reached that state of second childhood, with regard to which it is difficult to decide, whether the aged are more to be pitied for their imbecility, or envied for the total and apparently happy indifference, with which they usually sustain every affliction, however novel and startling it may be to others.

The mother followed, on her favorite pacing pony, with an infant sleeping on her lap; and an old brood mare, on whose broad back some blankets had been hastily tied, as a substitute for a saddle, carried three little urchins, bronzed to an Indian complexion, by constant exposure to the sun, and Savanna wind. The undissembled glee and merriment of these last, formed a striking contrast to the serious demeanour of the grandmother, and the more hurried anxiety of her daughter-in-law.

Mercédez Gamarra, a middle-aged woman, and her three grown daughters, received their cousins at the gate of the farm yard, with many embraces, and eager enquiries as to what had befallen them. Paulita Gomez informed them in a few words, that she had fled in consequence of observing preparations making by the royalists, for crossing the Aräuco; adding that, within less than an hour from the time of her leaving the pass of Merricúri, she had seen flames rising from her farm; and that, before daylight, three fires in the neighbourhood of the river had convinced her, that the work of destruction had already commenced.

Both families agreed on the absolute necessity of a speedy removal from the scene of impending warfare; but they determined on waiting until the next day, as they were well assured that their husbands or sons would speedily arrive, to assist them in their flight.

CHAPTER II.

THE RIVER.—THE OUT-LINE PICKET.

Lightly and brightly breaks away
The Morning from her mantle gray,
And the Noon will look on a sultry day.
Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,
That the fugitive may flee in vain.

Siege of Corinth.

THE pass of Merricúri, by which the Spanish army was entering the savannas, exhibited, to a superficial observer, nothing but a scene of tumult and confusion. Nevertheless, the crossing was conducted by the veteran general Morillo, with the assistance of his colleagues La Torre, Morález, and Calzáda, with military precision and regularity. They superintended in person, and at different points, the embarkation, landing, and subsequent formation of the troops; to which last operation, as being the most important, Morillo himself

tended; for an attack was hourly expected from Pāez and his Llanéros.

The royalists had not been able to procure any boats; nor could pontoons be possibly conveyed from head-quarters at Caraccas, through the narrow defiles of Villa de Cura, and over the rugged mountain roads leading from Parraparra to the low country. At a landing place opposite the farm-house, and about a musket shot above the pass, a party of *bastidores*, or pioneers, whose stern Gallician features were rendered more ferocious by the long moustachios, and ample beards, always worn by this class of Spanish soldiers,[1] were actively employed constructing rafts. Large logs of drift-wood, which had been left on the banks by the periodical inundations, and dried by the scorching rays of a vertical sun, supplied the workmen with ample materials; for it was merely necessary to lop off the superfluous branches, and cut the trunks to the requisite length. Stout poles of bambu were fastened across the logs, to which they were secured with thongs of raw hide, from the skins of the bullocks slaughtered for the use of the army; and tolerably secure rafts were formed by this means. Each was capable of conveying from twenty to thirty soldiers, seated in rows on their knapsacks, which were unslung, as a precaution against any accident from the rapidity of the current.

By means of a small canoe, which had been dragged by mules overland from the river Apúri, the rafts were slowly towed across, two at a time, to the lower landing place. When arrived there, as it was impossible to transport them back against the

stream, they were taken to pieces, for the sake of the hide fastenings, which returned in the canoe, and the logs were abandoned to the stream. At intervals, a drove of horses and mules were collected at the pass; and a few good swimmers having ridden into the water, each leading a beast, the rest of the animals were forced to follow by the shouts and blows of the soldiers. They then swam rapidly across, attended by the canoe, which, by keeping to leeward of them, prevented them from straggling down the stream, and guided them to the landing place, where they ascended the bank,—

"With plash, with scramble, and with bound."

As the troops landed, they were marched through the belt of forest which skirts the Arăuco, to the edge of the open savanna. There the piles of arms glittering in regular rows, and the numerous light columns of smoke ascending among the trees, showed where the advanced guard of the army had bivouacked, and was preparing the morning repast.

About a mile in advance of the line was a clump of palm trees, where forty or fifty saddled horses were grazing. Two rows of lances fixed upright in the ground, with blue and red bannerols fluttering in the morning breeze, pointed out the station of a Spanish cavalry out-line picket; and a few fires, round which the men were grouped, denoted that they also were snatching a hasty meal, before the serious conflict that was expected should take place. At a little distance from

the soldiers, but under the shade of the same trees, sat two officers in the uniform of a captain and lieutenant of lancers, beguiling the tedious moments of inaction, with their cigars and conversation.

The elder of the two, a tall fair-haired Spaniard, of about five and twenty, commanded the advanced post. He was a son of General La Torre; and partook largely of his father's detestation of, and contempt for, the natives of South America. Educated from his boyish years in garrisons and camps, he had been initiated, at an early age, into those scenes of dissipation and licentiousness, for which the armies of modern Spain are notorious. Although of a generous temper, and far from being of a sanguinary disposition,—for which youth, at least, can offer no shadow of excuse,—he considered the revolt of the colonies to be an act of so heinous a nature, as to justify almost every species of severity that could be inflicted on the rebellious Criollos. This opinion, however, which he took every opportunity of repeating with exaggerated vehemence, was in a great measure theoretical; for he had never been known to be practically guilty of those extremes of military rigor, which he advocated in the abstract. On the contrary, he had even subjected himself, in more than one instance, to reprimands from his superiors, in consequence of his unauthorised lenity, which was designated as culpable negligence, in conniving at the escape of unfortunate prisoners of war, who, he was well aware, would be allowed no quarter, were he to deliver them up to Morillo, Morález, or his own father.

His companion on picket, younger than himself by some years, was of a swarthier complexion than usual, even in a Spaniard. This circumstance, together with his piercing black eyes, shaded by long silken lashes,—a striking feature in the Indian countenance,—gave him more the appearance of a Llanéro than of an European. The conversation of the young men left no room for doubt on this point.

"These, then, are thy far-famed native Llanos, Castro!" said the elder;—"thy never-failing theme, since we first met at Madrid. By our Lady of Zaragoza! I can discover little of the picturesque in them. Give me an Alaméda, rather,—were it even that dullest of all promenades at Caraccas,—in preference to these wilds, which evidently have no end, but in the marshes, nor any inhabitants, except deer and wild bullocks. Not a house have we seen since we entered the savannas, save the few that our reconnoitering party burned this morning; through disappointment doubtless, at finding no one at home to receive them. I own it passes my comprehension, how Morillo can expect to find an enemy here, worth all this preparation and forced marching. Tell me seriously, camarada! do you persist in asserting that this Paëz, the famous *toreadòr* we hear so much of, will venture to leave the shelter of his swamps, and face Fernando's troops?"

"Some years have elapsed since I last saw him, Don Pedro:" answered the lieutenant; "When I sailed from Caraccas, in 1814, he had not yet joined the insurgents. However, from the know-

ledge I formerly had of him, and the character he bears in the country for courage and enterprise, I have not the least doubt we shall see him, as soon as he receives intelligence of our having crossed the Arāuco. I fear Morillo is too sanguine in his expectations of marching over the Llanos without interruption, and returning to Caraccas in a month with Paëz's head, as he promised the troops in his address at our departure."

"This is all prejudice, Castro!" rejoined La Torre; "and a very natural one; for I shrewdly suspect your heart is more than half inclined to wish us ill luck, since we have entered the savannas. That little rebel cousin, whose father's farm-house you endeavoured to save from its merited fate this morning, will, I fear, one day shake your allegiance. It was all very well, your interchanging *billétes de amòr* with the fair Juanita, while the Llanos were tranquil, and we were peaceably in garrison at Caraccas; but beware of any such indiscretion now that we are in the field, and in your kinsmen's neighbourhood. *Cáramba!* Morillo has but small sympathy with any who cherish the tender passion. Should he be informed by his spies, (whom you know he keeps in every regiment in the army,) or even suspect any secret correspondence with the [2] *Chocútos*, male or female,—whose very name is an abomination to him,—thou art but a lost Llanéro!"

"Were I not well persuaded of your honour, La Torre, I should be inclined to suspect that I had made an imprudent choice in selecting you as my

confidant. Fear nothing, however, on the score of my loyalty. I must indeed own that, were it not for the hope of seeing Juanita Gomez again, I could have been well content that our corps had been ordered to Mexico, Peru, or anywhere, rather than be in actual service against my relations and former friends. But as it has so chanced, trust me you shall at all times find me as true to the battle-cry of 'Santiago! ý cierra España!' as if I had been born in Madrid."

"I am far from disputing it, camarada; and believe me you are fortunate in having me for a confidant and friend, under our present circumstances. My father,—*Dios le guardé!*—has promised to procure me the honour, as he terms it, (though I beg leave to differ from him on this point, as well as on some few others,) of commanding an out-line picket, or reconnoitering party, as often as he conveniently can, without exposing himself to the charge of partiality. As I can hardly fail of having frequent opportunities of making prisoners, I will give you, for a messenger to *la bella Juanita*, every one I can contrive to spare; although by so doing I should incur the displeasure of the high and mighty Morillo. Meanwhile, as it is plain, from the tedious manner in which the crossing of the army is conducted, that there are no hopes of marching to-day, suppose you were to pass the time in explaining to me how it happens that you, a Llanéro by birth, should be in arms for the king. You are, if I mistake not, the only native of Varinas in our army; although

we have many stanch royalists from the vallies of Bogotà and Popayàn."

"Willingly, Don Pedro; and the more readily, as I shall by that means, perhaps, obtain a truce to your raillery."

CHAPTER III.

THE CREOLE ROYALIST'S TALE.

" I ran it through, e'en from my boyish days,
" To th' very moment that he bade me tell it.
" Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
" And with it all my travel's history."

Othello.

" My father, Don Toribio Castro, was formerly governor of San Fernando del Apúri;—the town which Päez reduced to ashes last week, for the sole purpose of depriving our army of a depót for the hospital and stores. He was born at the town of Ubéda, in Andalusia; but had been for many years settled in Varínas, where he married a sister of Silvestre Gomez, one of the principal cattle farmers of this very part of the savannas. My mother died, while I was yet an infant; and I was both nursed and brought up at the hato of Merricúri, which I always called and considered my home. As San Fernando was the dullest of all possible places, except perhaps at Carnostolendas, or the

feast of the patron saint, at which times it used to be visited by the farmers and their families, from the neighbouring villages of Apuríto and San Juan de Pallára, I was never so happy as when with my cousins in the plains. Notwithstanding your prejudices, La Torre, I am convinced you would be pleased with the frank hospitable manners of the Llanéros; and, as for amusement, their whole life resembles that of hunters, which I know is your delight, as well as it is mine.

"As I grew up, I became expert in all the national exercises; such as breaking in the wild horse, which is a Llanéro's chief, as well as most useful accomplishment. A week scarcely passed, in summer, without a bull-fight or a panther-hunt. The former exercise was not such a tame spiritless exhibition as is to be seen in the Spanish *coliséos;* for the bull is allowed fair play in the open savanna, where he has full scope to profit by his activity and fleetness, in which quality those of Varínas are frequently an over-match for a horse.

"In the rainy season, when the Llanos are regularly inundated during at least three months, every farm-house, being built on a small eminence, is completely insulated while the floods last; and yet the winter was far from hanging heavy on our hands. The herds of wild cattle are then gradually driven from the low pastures, by the overflowing of the rivers, and compelled to assemble on the only spots of dry ground that are to be found; consequently we had not so far to ride, daily, to drive in a bullock for the use of the family. Still we were never at a loss for employment, in making

and repairing our saddlery, twisting horse-hair *cabestros*, and plaiting those neat bridle reins of colt-skin, which are in such request in the hilly country. Our evenings were usually passed cheerfully in the large hall of the hato, with the dances of the country, as El Bambúco, and La Zambullidóra, so far superior to the stiff *contradanzas* and formal *boléros* of Europe; and the Llanéras are famous for their skill on the guitar and harp, as well as for singing their national airs.

"When I had nearly completed my seventeenth year, my father unexpectedly sent for me, to accompany him to Caraccas. The rebellion, which has since assumed such a formidable aspect, had been merely arrested in its progress, not crushed, by the vigorous and severe measures of Monteverde. A considerable body of troops, which had been collected in New Grenada, by the indefatigable insurgent, Simòn Bolivar, had already gained some advantages over the king's troops, in the provinces of Cumaná and Barcelona. As some disturbances had also taken place in the neighbourhood of San Fernando, Monteverde thought it expedient to summon Don Toribio, as being Governor of that Plaza, to appear in person before the Audiencia, for the purpose of answering certain interrogatories on the subject. Although I had long ardently desired to visit the capital of Venezuela, I was now surprised to find, that the opportunity I had so often wished for, while there was no probability of my being indulged with it, was far from giving me the delight I had anticipated.

"I can guess, by your satirical smile, that you

expect to hear a parting scene described; but I know you too well to hazard anything like a sentimental description. Suffice it to say, that I was then, for the first time, aware that the preference I felt for my cousin Juanita's society was far warmer than the brotherly affection I had supposed it. Had it not been for this unexpected separation, we might probably have continued to dance together every night, and to live in all the intimacy of such near relationship, without being conscious of a thought beyond friendship. I soon, however, forgot my regret, in the scene of enchantment, so entirely new to me, which the first sight of a large city presented. The bustle and magnificence of Caraccas, which strikes me even now after having visited Europe, astonished and enraptured me, as much as it evidently annoyed and embarrassed my father. His naturally grave and melancholy disposition had been saddened by the loss of my mother, whom he tenderly loved; and he was shy, even to misanthropy, in consequence of the habits of solitude and seclusion, that he had acquired in his remote provincial government.

"On our arrival at Caraccas, we went to the house of my father's correspondent and countryman, Don Gaspàr Herrera, in the Calle de los Capuchínos. This was a wealthy merchant, who had long acted as agent in disposing of mules, hides, and such other articles, the produce of the Llanos, as my father, and his connections in Varínas, had been in the habit of sending to the capital for sale. Don Gaspàr united in his manner the pomposity and pride of birth of a Spanish Hidalgo, with the self-

sufficiency and importance, founded on conscious wealth, of a Caraccas merchant. Although sincerely attached to my father, by the ties of old acquaintance and friendship, he could scarcely conceal his contempt for the retired life of a country governor; and his sense of superiority could not be entirely suppressed, even by respect for Don Toribio's private character, and for his European birth;—no small distinction, as you are well aware, in the colonial cities.

" He paid me the compliment of taking great, and (as he wished it to be understood), flattering notice of me; being doubtless gratified by the instinctive deference I paid to his superior knowledge of the world. At the same time, he took every opportunity of making me fully sensible of my rustic education, by means of constantly hinting at my *mauvaise honte*, which I doubtless exhibited, somewhat glaringly, in the gay society to which I was now introduced for the first time. When conversing with my father, he made it a frequent subject of regret, that I should be buried alive, as he termed it, in the Llanos. He insisted so strongly on the necessity of my entering into life, and seeing something of the world, that Don Toribio could not but reluctantly admit, that it would be doing me an injustice to deprive me of all chance of making a figure, by confining me, at my age, to a society of Llanéros.

" My father, on appearing before the Audiencia, gave a satisfactory account of the administration of his government. He was dismissed by the Captain-General, with many encomiums, and a com-

mand, in the shape of an earnest request, that he would lose no time in returning to San Fernando; as his presence there was considered of the greatest importance, for the maintenance of order in the present disturbed state of affairs. Don Gaspàr now reiterated his advice and importunities; offering to take me into his counting-house, and personally to superintend my mercantile education. He at length wrung from Don Toribio his unwilling consent to leave me behind him.

"My father bid me farewell, with demonstrations of affection that were unusual to him; for his reserved manner had often made me doubt whether or not he really loved me. He recommended me strongly to Don Gaspàr's care, desiring me to be guided in every respect by his advice, as he placed unlimited confidence in his prudence and discretion. He shortly after set out for San Fernando, laying his injunctions on me to write to him by every opportunity. Unfortunately, he had been so much harrassed and fatigued in mind and body, that he was seized with the calentura, at Ortiz, and scarcely reached the city of Calabozo, on his way to the Llanos, when he died. He spent his last moments in dictating a letter to me, in which he appointed Don Gaspàr as my guardian, and gave me the necessary directions for claiming some property belonging to him in the neighbourhood of the city of Córdova.

"My grief for his loss, although severely felt at first, was necessarily transient I had been but seldom, and at long intervals, in his company during my whole life, previous to our journey

together from San Fernando to Caraccas; and I must confess, that the reserve, not to say severity, of his manners, had always made me eager to escape from his society, to that of my cousins, at Merricúri. The constant routine of mercantile business, that now occupied my attention during the day, and the gaiety and dissipation, so universally met with in the evening at Caraccas, into which I was soon initiated, speedily banished all traces of violent sorrow from my mind. Don Gaspàr, who kindly endeavoured to divert the melancholy that he took it for granted I must feel, introduced me to several young Caracqueños of my own age; and they quickly succeeded in disencumbering me of that *mauvaise honte*, which had scandalised him so much on my first arrival from the Llanos.

"Most of the Spanish officers, in garrison at the capital, were frequent visitors at the dinner parties and tertulias which it was Don Gaspàr's pride to give. Their conversation generally turned on the splendour and pleasures of Madrid, Sevilla, and other celebrated cities of Spain; giving, as I have since discovered, highly exaggerated descriptions of the wealth and happiness enjoyed there. Every comparison, which they took occasion to make between South America and Europe, was unanimously decided in favour of the latter, to which opinion Don Gaspàr invariably assented; so that I was by degrees persuaded to look with contempt on the land of my birth, and talk, as well as dream, of nothing but visiting Spain. It was considered fashionable, at that time, among the young men of

Caraccas, to imitate as much as possible the Spanish manners and pronunciation, and to affect to undervalue everything colonial.

"I now began to importune my guardian, to obtain permission for me to take a short tour through Spain. My pretence was an anxious wish to visit my father's native town of Ubéda, near which he had an uncle, who was still living, but from whom he had not heard for many years, having mortally offended him by marrying a Criolla. You well know with what horror such an alliance is to this day regarded, in most parts of Spain. This is not to be wondered at; for the Consejo de las Indias, in the solemn report made, not many years since, to the regency at Cadiz respecting the natives of the colonies, has not scrupled to describe them as a set of "*salvàges ý brutos*," unworthy of the privilege of baptism; being very little, if at all, superior to the *Oran Otan*, in either mental or personal qualifications.

"My wish was far from displeasing Don Gaspàr, for he was proud of his country, and agreeably flattered by any predeliction shewn it; he nevertheless hesitated for some time, on account of my youth and inexperience. He was at length persuaded, by my repeated entreaties, to promise that, if he could obtain permission from the Captain-General of Caraccas, I should sail for Spain in the course of a month, on board one of the register galleons, under the care of a confidential super-cargo, whom he had appointed to take charge of a valuable consignment of goods, which he was about to ship for Cadiz. Application was accordingly made in

my behalf to General Monteverde; and, on the usual security being entered into by my guardian, my name was inserted in the list of Criollos, to whom permission was granted to visit Europe.

"I would willingly have gone down to the Llanos, to take leave of my cousins, in the interval previous to the time appointed for the galleon's sailing; but Don Gaspàr would not hear of it. He alleged his apprehension of my relapsing into my former rusticity, which he had been at such pains to correct; and I feared to urge him too importunately, lest he might be irritated so far, as to retract the permission I had found so much difficulty in obtaining, for my journey to Europe. I wrote, however, to my uncle Silvèstre, by a courier, who was charged with despatches to the new governor of San Fernando; and received an answer, the very day previous to the sailing of the galleon. My cousins' letter was full of affectionate wishes for my safe arrival, and speedy return from Spain; charging me never to forget my mother's country, which was also my native land; and kindly reproaching me for suffering myself to be persuaded, by any stranger in blood, to leave South America, without having paid a farewell visit at Merricúri.

"When I had received the necessary passport, Don Gaspàr accompanied me the same evening down to the port of La Guayra, where the ship lay ready for sea; and consigned me to the care of his super-cargo, with as much indifference, as if I had been one of his zurón of cacaos, from Aragöa. Most descriptions of voyages merely consist of repetitions of the usual changes of weather experienced in

crossing the ocean; I will therefore spare you the relation of mine. Suppose me then landed at Cadiz, and looking in vain for the preeminence in splendour, or even comfort, of the Spanish buildings over those of Caraccas;—as I had been taught to expect;"—

"Santa Maria! friend Castro;" interrupted La Torre; "this exordium of yours savours strongly of nationality. I should not be surprised to hear you cry—'*Viva la Patria!*' one of these days. Can you seriously compare Caraccas to Cadiz?"

"Not only compare them, camarada! but give a decided preference to the former. Think, for a moment, of passing a sultry day,—such as this is likely to prove,—in the narrow filthy streets of Cadiz, where rows of lofty houses on each side exclude every breath of air; and then remember the spacious court-yards, shaded by orange and citron trees, and corridors cooled by fountains, as we have them in Caraccas; and you must own that I am in the right.

"As my stay in Spain was limited to three months, at the expiration of which Don Gaspàr's super-cargo was to return to Caraccas, I lost no time, on my arrival at Cadiz, in setting out for the city of Córdova. After making some enquiry, I was directed to Bella-vista, the estate of my father's uncle, Don Sebastian Castro de Bäeza, on the banks of the Guadalquivir, between Còrdova and Andúxas. As I rode slowly up the long avenue of cork trees, leading to the mansion of my ancestors, I had full leisure to reflect on the awkwardness of my situation, in having to an-

nounce at the same moment my father's death, and my own consanguinity to one of whom I knew nothing, except the fact of his inveterate antipathy to all my mother's countrymen.

"On arriving at the house, I was ushered into a spacious hall, by several attendants, dressed in rich old-fashioned livery. One of them, to whom I mentioned my being the bearer of a letter from abroad to his master, summoned the mayor-domo, a venerable-looking old man, who took the letter of introduction with which Don Gaspàr Herréra had furnished me; and conducted me into a parlour, where he requested me to wait until he could obtain admittance to Don Sebastian, who was engaged, he informed me, with his father confessor. I was left here alone for about an hour, the longest I remember to have passed before or since, during which not a sound was heard in or about the old mansion. Refreshments were brought me, but I felt not the slightest inclination to partake of them; for I was thoroughly chilled by the ceremony and formality that appeared to prevail in the house; and more than once wished myself at the hato of Merricúri. I even felt strongly tempted, for a moment, to leave the mansion privately, and return to Cadiz, without waiting to see this grand-uncle of mine, whom I could not help fancying to myself of a haughty repulsive character.

"The mayor-domo at length returned to summon me to his master's presence; and conducted me across the hall that I had first entered, and up a broad stair-case into a corridor, at the farther end of which was Don Sebastian's apartment. My

grand-uncle was in earnest conversation, when I entered, with his confessor, a Dominican friar, who held in his hand the letter I had just brought. I was received graciously, though, as I conceived, stiffly and coldly, by Don Sebastian, who was prevented from rising, by an attack of the rheumatism; but he embraced me, kissing me on both cheeks, and remarking to the Padre my striking family likeness.

"My grand-uncle was nearly eighty years of age, but was an upright military-looking figure for so old a man; having served, as I was afterwards informed, many years in the royal Carabinéros de la Guardia. Although he had long since retired from the service, in consequence of his advanced age and occasional infirmities, he appeared to retain all his youthful energy of character; and continued to cling fondly to all those little peculiarities of dress and manner, which generally continue to distinguish those who have borne arms for any length of time. Instead of the warm night-cap used by most invalids, more especially at his time of life, he wore a richly laced forage-cap, which had apparently seen service; and, for a dressing-gown, he was wrapped in an ample cavalry *esclavina*, of blue cloth, with a scarlet collar and lining. He continued to cherish long moustachios, in which, although woefully thinned, and become white through age, he still took great pride; and was in the habit of twisting them, in the style of his younger days, when strongly excited by anything irritating his temper. After asking a few unimportant questions, in which he appeared studiously to avoid all allu-

sion to my parents, he remarked that a sick room could not fail to be a dull scene to a young man; and begged the chaplain to entertain me until dinner, when he hoped to be able to join us.

"I felt completely relieved by this opportunity of retiring; and followed the Padre, who was introduced to me by the name of Fray Ignacio, to the library. It was well furnished with books, consisting chiefly, I observed, of religious and military treatises; and commanded an extensive view of the estate, and of the broad and rapid Guadalquivir, from a large bow-window. I was agreeably surprised by the pleasing manners and conversation of this friar, who, although clothed in the white habits of a Dominican, showed not a trace of the moroseness and awkwardness usually acquired in the seclusion of a monastery. He was advanced in years, and of a spare frame of body; but retained the cheerfulness and activity of a much younger age. He had been, he informed me, many years chaplain to the regiment Don Sebastian formerly commanded. During that time, the old colonel had become so much attached to him, that, on resigning the command, he prevailed on Fray Ignacio to leave the service also, and accompany him in his retirement;—if that term can be applied to a house constantly full of visitors, when the owner of it enjoyed a temporary respite from his rheumatic pains.

"I learned from the chaplain's conversation, that Don Sebastian had one daughter, Doña Isidóra, of whom he was doatingly fond; although they seldom met, except at the dinner hour, and when

her father could persuade her to take an airing in the old family coach, drawn by six mules;—the utmost number permitted to be harnessed by any subject, even a *Gránde* of Spain. She lived retired, in a suite of apartments as far as possible from the bustle occasioned by company; and although not absolutely a recluse, avoided society as much as her father's fondness permitted her; amusing herself, in private, with books and music, in which last she was a proficient.

"Fray Ignacio then confided to me a secret, which sufficiently accounted for the bitter resentment Don Sebastian had conceived at my father's marriage, and which, had I before learned it, would undoubtedly have prevented me from visiting these my only European relations, in whom I had reason to believe that my appearance must give rise to unpleasant recollection. Doña Isidóra had formerly been devotedly attached to my father, who, it appeared, was totally ignorant of the extent of her affection. She was however so severely shocked, by a sudden resolution he formed of taking a voyage to Caraccas, that she was seized with a violent fever. During her illness, her life being despaired of by the physicians who attended her, she confessed her weakness to Don Sebastian, in presence of the chaplain, and by his direction, having previously extorted from her father a solemn promise, that he would keep it a secret from the unconscious object of her love. Although he strictly complied with her injunctions on this point, he repeatedly wrote to my father, urging him in the most earnest manner to return, and disclosing

to him his intention of making him heir to his estate. By some untoward accident, Don Toribio did not receive the letters, until he had been irrevocably engaged to my mother. The news of his marriage broke off all communication between him and his uncle, who, in the last letter he ever wrote to him, reproached him with asperity for not having previously consulted him; and declined all future correspondence with him, in a manner which, of course, appeared to my father the result of unwarrantable prejudice and unnatural caprice, as he never had an opportunity of being made acquainted with the real motive by which Don Sebastian was actuated.

"I expressed my gratitude to the chaplain for this piece of information, which he considerately confided to me with the kindest intention, that I might feel no surprise at any emotion Doña Isidóra might possibly betray, on first meeting me; although, he observed, her father would in all probability prepare her for my appearance. Our conversation then turned on this country; Fray Ignacio appearing extremely interested in the details that I gave him of our national customs. He made many enquiries respecting the state of affairs in South America, and expressed himself surprised at my descriptions; scarcely anything being even then known in Spain, as you are well aware, of her colonies.

"A servant appeared, who conducted me to an apartment, that had been prepared for me next to that of the chaplain; and I shortly after received a summons to dinner, which I attended with feelings

of considerable curiosity to see my female relative, whose history had so deeply interested me. I was surprised to find ten or twelve guests assembled round a fire in the *ante-sala;* for, from the silence that had prevailed throughout the house, I had no idea that any visitors were staying there. Don Sebastian was seated in an arm-chair, dressed in the uniform of the Carabinéros, which he wore as a mark of being still entitled to the privileges of "*fuero militàr, ý unifórme;*" with a well powdered wig in full curl, instead of the montero cap he wore when I first saw him in his sitting-room. He retained no appearance of being an invalid, except the flannels in which his feet and ancles were enveloped; and introduced me cheerfully to his friends, who welcomed me to Spain, but appeared at the same time to look with great curiosity on a Criollo of South America, as if they had been prepared to expect something extraordinary in my manners and language.

"Doña Isidóra at length entered, leaning on the arm of an elderly lady, who I found was her dueña or companion; and I could observe that she immediately looked for and perceived me, before her father presented me to her. He was evidently embarrassed on introducing me; and seemed, to me at least, anxiously to watch her looks. She appeared, however, scarcely discomposed; slightly colouring, as she welcomed me with a kindness and warmth of manner, which strongly contrasted with her father's coldness, and the formality of his guests. I need not add how irresistibly this attached me to her; and that I felt, for the first

time since I had entered the house, as if I were really among relations. During dinner, I repeatedly observed her eyes fixed on me with a look of melancholy interest, for which I should have been greatly at a loss to account, had I not been prepared for it by the chaplain's recital. But for her polite and delicate attention, together with that of Fray Ignacio, when Doña Isidóra and the dueña retired, I should have felt completely forlorn. As I was totally ignorant of the political topics of the day, and, to say the truth, as little interested in their discussions as any youth of my age might be supposed to be, I could take no part whatever in the conversation that appeared so deeply interesting to my uncle and his guests. I had not so much as heard that his majesty had removed from Valencia to Madrid, nor that the Cortes had been dissolved; and I was equally ignorant of the banishment of the Cardenàl de Borbòn, and the recent disgrace of the once popular Argüelles. To sum up my deficiencies, I knew nothing whatever of the *Partído*, at the head of which was the celebrated Espoz ý Mina, who at that very time,—as you may remember,—kept the whole neighbourhood of Pampeluna in a state of alarm, with his guerilla parties. Shortly after dinner, all retired to their respective apartments to enjoy the siesta; and I saw no more of Doña Isidóra that night.

"The remainder of the party again assembled to coffee and cigarillos; and the evening passed in a manner which, to me at least, was exceedingly tedious. Don Sebastian enquired if I understood the game of *cháquete*; [3] and, on my confessing total

ignorance of it, I could perceive, by a slight elevation of his eye-brows, that he was both surprised and ashamed for me. Where could I have been educated!—To be alike unacquainted with politics and backgammon, were two of the most glaring deficiencies, in the old colonel's opinion, that I could possibly have been detected in.

" He then challenged his usual opponent, the chaplain, to a trial of skill at that game; and was soon eagerly employed rattling the dice, and exclaiming, —" *dos-as!*"—" *cinco ý seis!*" &c.; while his guests divided into parties of *primèro* and *briscàn*, the mysteries of which I had not yet penetrated. I therefore took the earliest opportunity of retiring to rest, to which I was well enough inclined; not so much through fatigue from my journey,—although, to say the truth, my hired mule was the counterpart of the hackney pourtrayed by Cervantes de Saavedra, in his description of the combat between the cavalier of La Mancha, and the Biscaino,—as through desire to escape that most tiresome of all occupations, overlooking a game of cards, of which you neither understand the theory nor practice."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ALARM.—PAEZ'S LANCERS.—THE CONFLAGRATION.

Yet 'tis not helm or feather;
For ask yon Despot whether
His plumed bands can bring such hands,
And hearts, as ours together.
Leave pomps to those that need 'em;
Adorn but Man with freedom;
And proud he braves the gaudiest slaves,
That crawl where Monarchs lead 'em.

MOORE.

CASTRO's recital was at this moment interrupted by the arrival of one of General Morillo's aides-de-camp, who brought an order for La Torre to withdraw his picket, and to fall back immediately on the main body of the army. He informed the young men, that a reconnoitring party, which had been detached early in the morning, had returned with intelligence, that Pãez was in rapid advance from his camp, at Caujaràl, at the head of his Llanéros, and might be expected at the pass of Merricúri in about half an hour.

La Torre accordingly commanded his troop to bridle and mount; and was conducted by the

aide-de-camp to the ground where his regiment was already formed in close column; the men being as yet dismounted, but standing at their horses' heads. Morillo was well aware, from dear bought experience in the plains of Calabozo and Sombrêro, of the inability of his cavalry to cope with Llanéros; he had therefore, on this occasion, stationed the Spanish hussars and lancers in some small glades, formed by breaks in the belt of forest bordering the Araüco. At the entrance of each of these, were planted two field-pieces: the artillerymen were at their posts, and had matches burning in readiness near them. Along the edge of the wood, where it opened into the savanna, the infantry were drawn up in a dark line; and the small detachments, which occasionally came up from the rear, and fell in with their respective regiments, showed that the crossing was still actively carried on. Aides-de-camp and adjutants, distinguished by the drooping white feathers in their hats, were spurring, *rienda suelta*, along the front of the line, bearing orders to different corps, as if life and death depended on the celerity of their motions. Scarcely a sound was to be heard; all eyes being anxiously turned in the direction by which the enemy was expected to make his appearance.

His advance was speedily announced by clouds of dust rising on the horizon, and rapidly approaching the pass of Merricúri. The glittering lance points were soon visible; and, as the horsemen came nearer, the small black swallow-tailed banners of Pãez's far famed Guardia de Honor

were distinctly seen above the long grass, which as yet concealed both men and horses. The flames from the farm-house, which was burned the night before, had spread to the dry grass in the neighbourhood, and had consumed it, for an extent of several square miles, in front of part of the Spanish army. Into this clear space the Llanéros advanced at a gallop; shouting,—"*Viva la Patri! Mueran los Godos!*" They were in number about five hundred; all picked men, the flower of Päez's army; and so great was their confidence in their chief, that, had he permitted them, they would have dashed in, without the slightest hesitation, among the whole Spanish army; flanked as it was by artillery, and protected, by the position Morillo had selected in the wood, against any attack by cavalry.

Päez halted his men at about half a mile from the edge of the wood, and rode forward, attended by three or four of his dark-featured warriors, mounted on the spirited and elegantly formed native horses, which are caught wild in the savannas. Each of these officers also carried a lance with a black bannerol, similar to those of their soldiers, on which a skull and crossed bones were rudely embroidered with white cotton. The chief himself rode a dark iron-grey charger, with a flowing mane and tail; for it is not the custom of the Llanéros to disfigure their horses by cropping them. His dress was similar to that of his companions in arms; being simply a shirt, open at the collar and breast, with remarkably wide sleeves, made of English handkerchief-pieces of a red cross-

barred pattern; and loose white cotton drawers, reaching a little below the knee. His legs and feet were bare; but he wore massive silver spurs, with sharp rowels of about four inches in diameter. On his head was a low-crowned sombrero, made of palm leaves split and plaited; with a broad blue riband tied under the chin for a *barbiquexa*. His lance was light and easily manageable; the pole being made of a tough and elastic black cane, found in several parts of the plains. It was carried by a boy, about twelve years of age, mounted on a full sized and high mettled horse: he constantly attended the general as his page, and was a great favorite in the army on account of his utter insensibility to danger, as well as his activity in horsemanship and swimming:—two accomplishments absolutely necessary to be acquired by those who dwell in the savannas.

Pāez, the dreaded Llanéro chief, showed no trace of the ferocity that has been attributed to him, in his fair open countenance! His hair curled naturally and closely over his high forehead, and he wore small black moustachios, but no whiskers. His dark eye alone betrayed indications of that quickness of temper which so frequently hurried him to deeds of exteme severity,—to say the least of them—however they may be palliated, in his case, by pleading the expediency of retaliation. His cheek, which was generally rather pale, was now flushed by exertion, and the excitement produced by his exulting anticipation of an impending fray with the enemies of his country. He rode along at a slow pace, leisurely reconnoitring the royalist line;:

sitting sideways, (his usual attitude on such occasions,) with one knee crossed over the holsters. Although Pãez and his staff were within a hundred yards of the wood, not a musket was aimed at him by the Spanish infantry; intense curiosity, and perhaps a feeling of respect for his cool and determined bearing, rivetting their attention to the motions of this extraordinary man.

Having at length passed the whole of the enemy's line, much in the same manner as if he had been reviewing his own troops, he took his lance from the boy who carried it. Then, seating himself upright in the saddle, he returned at a canter, waving on high the well-known threatening symbol of "*Guerra á la Muerte,*" as a challenge to the Spanish cavalry to leave the wood, in which they were sheltered, and face him in the savanna; while enthusiastic shouts of—"*Viva Pãez!*"—"*Muera Morillo!*"—burst from his guard, which was attentively watching him.

When he rejoined his lancers, they all dismounted and unbridled their horses, by way of an additional insult to the enemy's cavalry; keeping them fast at the same time, by the *cabestro*, or twisted hair halter used among them. The Llanéros then took out their short wooden churumbélas, and tobacco; and having struck a light, began to smoke with as much composure, as if they had been seated in their own camp. Morillo, however, was not disposed to let them remain here undisturbed. Two light six-pounders were brought up to the front, and a shot soon whistled over the group, that was quietly enjoying their pipes. The Llanéros, who

were at that early period of the war totally unaccustomed to artillery, started on their feet, and prepared to move out of range of the field pieces; but before they could mount, a second shot killed a horse, nearly carrying off in its passage the arm of the lancer, who was bridling the animal. Pãez hastily caught up the wounded man, whom he placed in his saddle; and mounted *en ancas*, guiding the horse, and supporting his fainting comrade. As they galloped off, in their usual scattered way of retreating, a third ball, which was sent after them at random, merely knocked up the dust among the horses' feet, without doing any mischief. The Spanish troops, which had hitherto kept a profound silence, hailed the precipitate retreat of Pãez and his Guardia, with shouts of—"*Mueran los Insurgentes!*—"*Abaxo los Chocútos!*"—supposing that they had left the field in a panic, and that no further interruption would be given by them, for that day at least.

Nothing, however, was farther from Pãez's intention, than to give the royalist army a moment's respite, while he possessed the means of harassing them, without seriously endangering his own troops. Although the personal safety of his soldiers as rarely entered into his calculations as that of himself, the peculiar circumstances of the country, and Bolívar's positive instructions, enforced by entreaties to which he so seldom condescended, had induced Pãez to proceed with some appearance of caution, for the first time in his life, greatly against his inclination. This unexpectedly prudent conduct disconcerted all Morillo's

measures. He had calculated on being able to provoke Pãez, as often as he thought proper, to a pitched battle, in which the Llanéro chief must have inevitably been defeated with severe loss; and would, in all probability, have fallen a sacrifice to his impetuosity, as his custom of heading his guard on every charge was well known.

This rapid mode of retreat, (*en barajúste*, as the Llanéros term it,) would be a dangerous manœuvre to attempt with most other troops, as it would probably end in irrecoverable dispersion; but it was quite usual among this irregular cavalry. As soon therefore as they saw Pãez turn, and wave his banner, which was purposely distinguished from the rest, by being twice as large, as well as by being edged with a deep black fringe, they rallied without any other signal being necessary; and collected round him, anxious to hear, and eager to execute, any order he might give them.

Pãez's first thought was to send away the wounded man to the rear, having bandaged the arm in the best manner circumstances would admit of, by means of a prompt and general supply of handkerchiefs;—an ornament for the head in which the Llanéros take great pride. He then entrusted him to a steady old lancer of the guard, with orders to convey him to the camp at Caujaràl. The veteran General Zaraza was there, having joined Pãez a short time before, with the remainder of his guerilleros which had been dispersed at Rincon de los Toros, more as an amateur (even by his own account,) than as being capable of rendering any

effectual service. He was therefore directed to fall back, with the main body of the cavalry which had been left in his charge, on the savanna of Caña-Fístola; and to wait there, until he should receive farther orders.

In the next place, as Pãez could easily divine, from the Spaniards having already burned the hato of Merricúri, and two or three others which stood not far off, that Morillo was resolved to carry fire and sword through every accessible part of the Llanos, he turned his attention, with the paternal care of a chieftain, to provide for the safety of the families of those who were with him in the army. He therefore ordered one or more belonging to each farm, (selecting them himself, as he was personally acquainted with every individual of his guard,) to set out immediately for their respective hatos. They were to assist the old men, women, and children, in their flight to a remote part of the savannas, which he had chosen as the safest place of concealment for the emigrants. It was situated in the woods between the lagoon of Cunavíchi and the river Orinoco; and was surrounded by intricate swamps and morasses, which rendered it difficult of access, even to natives of the plains.

Pãez then called a council of the elder Llanéros; and demanded their opinion on the plan of attack most advisable to be adopted under existing circumstances. All agreed, on a cool consideration of the case, that the Spanish infantry was too securely posted in the wood, to render an attack on it prac-

ticable. It was therefore unanimously determined, that the cavalry should be dislodged, if possible, from the position they had taken up; for not a shadow of doubt was entertained of defeating them, (although far superior in number to the Guardia de Honor,) provided they would show themselves in the open savanna. Many expedients were proposed, for this purpose, and rejected as ineffectual; but at length a thought struck Pãez, which was immediately acted upon.

Fire was readily procured, by means of a *yezquéro;* and in a few minutes the long dry grass was in a blaze, in several places, to windward of the Spanish army. A fresh breeze, that blows as constantly as the trade-wind, during the day, across these unsheltered plains, fanned the conflagration, which rolled in red billows towards the wood, in and about which the Spanish forces were stationed. Morillo was speedily apprised of the approach of this novel and terrible enemy, which advanced under a thick canopy of smoke, with the roar of a mighty furnace, threatening inevitable destruction to every thing in its path. Unappalled by the imminent danger, the cool veteran issued the necessary orders to the different corps of infantry, which marched forward into the open space, that had been previously cleared of the long grass, forming close columns in rapid succession, as they disengaged themselves from the wood.

The greater part of the cavalry, which had been stationed in separate parts of the forest, wherever an opening was to be found between the battalions of infantry, succeeded in galloping out, and forming

in the rear of the columns. One squadron, however, which was on the left of the position which the army had just occupied, and was consequently the nearest to the conflagration, became so suddenly enveloped in smoke, that the horses, half suffocated by it, and terrified at the same time by the loud crackling of the flames, refused to move. Their riders were reluctantly compelled to abandon them; saving their own lives with no small difficulty, by a hasty flight through the wood. Two pieces of artillery, with a caisson of ammunition, were likewise obliged to be left by the gunners; some of whom were severely scorched in attempting to save them. The caisson blew up, soon after the flames had reached it; and the carriages of the guns were rendered totally useless.

Morillo's presence of mind extricated his troops from a situation, which they now plainly saw would have been truly dreadful. They were still far from being comfortably situated; for, although there was no danger of the flames extending to the open ground on which they were formed, the heated smoke, driven by the wind through their ranks, was scarcely bearable. The fire had, by this time, communicated to the interior of the wood, where it raged with increased fury. The brush wood shortly became a mass of vivid flame, which crept up the dry bark, and spread from branch to branch of such trees as were decayed by age, each of which resembled a separate pillar of fire. The conflagration in the savanna ceased, as it reached the limits of the grass, where it met with no more fuel; and the cloud of smoke being dispersed, the

Llanéros were seen advancing over the blackened soil, in the rear of the flames, with Pãez at their head, eager to observe, and prompt to profit by, any confusion that might have arisen in the royalist army. As he could see no opening, of which advantage might be taken, and was unwilling to expose his men to the murderous cross fire, which any attempt at charging the columns must inevitably have drawn on them, he drew off his guard, and slowly took the road to Caujaràl; leaving the Spaniards for a while in undisputed possession of the ground.

As the whole of the royalist troops had not as yet crossed the river, Morillo ordered each regiment to bivouac on the spot where it was halted. Out-line pickets were accordingly called for by the adjutant-general; and having been furnished by the corps which were for duty, they were posted in the customary stations, but nearer the main body than usual, on account of the exposed nature of the ground.

La Torre, who was as before in command of one of the advanced posts, was directed to return to the clump of palm trees which he had previously occupied, and which was not far from the present position of the army. Having appointed the necessary sentries and patroles, he called on his friend Castro, who was again lieutenant of his party, to resume his narrative, which he did as follows.

CHAPTER V.

CONTINUATION OF THE CREOLE-ROYALIST'S TALE.

Foil'd, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,
Full in the centre stands the bull at bay,
Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast,
And foes disabled in the brutal fray:
And now the Matadors around him play,
Shake the red cloak, and poise the ready brand:
Once more through all he bursts his thundering way—
Vain rage! the mantle quits the conynge hand,
Wraps his fierce eye—'tis past—he sinks upon the sand!

Childe Harold.

"I ROSE early the next morning, as had been my constant custom when in Varínas, and strolled out into the park of Bella-vista. There I was met by Fray Ignacio, who conducted me round the grounds, entertaining me during our walk with his very agreeable conversation. He led me into a spacious garden at the back of the house, in which the first flowers of an European spring were just beginning to shew themselves. While I was admiring these, most of which were new to me,—except a few of our common weeds, that were here honoured with a shelter in a green-house or under hand-glasses, inventions of which I had not the

least previous conception,—the sound of a guitar, delightfully touched, attracted my attention to the window of an upper room, that overlooked the garden. Fray Ignacio informed me, that it was Doña Isidóra's apartment; and, that we might enjoy her music unobserved; we agreed to enter an arbour, situated immediately beneath the window. From thence we heard the following song, which has been indelibly imprinted on my memory; no less by the beauty of the words themselves, than by the plaintive melody of the air:—

'Acaba de matàr me,
'Melancolía!
'Mas quiero muerte amarga
'Que larga vída.
'Quando sepais mi muerte,
'Ven al instante!
'A sacar de mi pecho
'Tu bella imágen.
'Pues yo no quiero llevar, hasta al sepulcro,
'Lo que me ha muerto!'

"She ceased, and we proceeded in our walk. On our return to the house, we were met by a servant, whom Doña Isidóra had sent to request us both to breakfast in her apartment. The chaplain informed me, that he frequently received this invitation; for Don Sebastian always rose late, and then merely took chocolate and a cigar; and the visitors breakfasted in their separate apartments, at the hours that best suited them.

"Doña Isidóra's sitting-room was fitted up in a style of modern elegance, which was perfectly new to me, and formed a striking contrast to the antique,

though handsome furniture of the rest of the house. Books, which were not exclusively on subjects connected with devotion, as I should have anticipated, —paintings, some of which were in an unfinished state,—and musical instruments, proved that her pursuits were not altogether of a sombre cast; although, in consequence of a vow made during the dangerous illness occasioned by her early disappointment, she constantly wore the dark habit of Nuestra Señora de Dolores. This was so arranged, when she appeared in public, in compliance with her father's wishes, as to be scarcely distinguishable from the mantilla and saya worn by the rest of the ladies in company; but it gave her, when seen in private, very much the appearance of a nun. She did not, however, imitate the devotees of that order so scrupulously, as to cause her hair to be cut close. On the contrary, she paid particular attention to the arrangement of her long black tresses.

" Her conversation was cheerful, and her manners extremely fascinating; perhaps still more so for a slight tinge of habitual melancholy, which is far from being incompatible with occasional cheerfulness, while it gives it a more exalted tone. She made many enquiries about Venezuela; avoiding, at the same time, the most distant allusion to my deceased parents. Once however, although involuntarily, and evidently unobserved by herself, I could hear her say—*How like!*—and could easily divine what was at that moment passing in her mind.

" On our rising to take leave, she expressed an earnest wish to see us both every morning at the

same hour. We retired to the library, where Fray Ignacio left me to amuse myself with the comedies of Lope Felix de Vega, while he went to enquire after Don Sebastian's health. I was deeply engaged with the comedy of "Por la puente, Juana!" when I received a summons to attend my grand-uncle in his room, and found him considerably recovered from his rheumatic attack, and appearing to enjoy much better spirits than on the preceding evening. He gave me a letter of introduction to his lawyer, an escriváno of Cordova, who, he said, would give me every information on the subject of my father's property, to which I had an undoubted claim. It was necessary for me to give this person a regular legal authority, to recover all arrears of rent, &c., in my name, and to enable him to go through the forms necessary for obtaining possession of my inheritance. As the old mayor-domo was going that morning to Córdova, on business for his master, Don Sebastian advised me to take the opportunity of accompanying him; for he was a confidential servant, who would be of service to me on the road, and in shewing me the city.

"I therefore set out with the old man, and found him rather too fond of hearing himself talk, as most Andalusians are; but he was, upon the whole, an entertaining, as well as highly useful *camarada de viage*. He dwelt, with evident interest, on various anecdotes of my father's younger days; having known Don Toribio, he informed me, when a child. He also took occasion, during our ride, to give me more of the domestic history of my own family, than I had ever before been made acquainted with.

"On entering Córdova, we went immediately to the house of the escriváno, Mäestro Tomas Tintéro, to whom I was introduced by the mayor-domo, who appeared on very familiar terms with him. He was a precise, old-fashioned little Biscäino; and when he had read Don Sebastian's letter of introduction, he appeared confused between the habitual formality of his profession, and his anxiety to show sufficient attention to so near a relation of his "*honrado patròn*," as he always called my grand-uncle. He expressed himself highly honoured by the commission I proposed entrusting to him; and took brief notes of the documents necessary to be drawn up; promising, on the faith of an escriváno's word, to set all other business aside immediately, and to have them in readiness for my signature within two days, at which time I promised to return for the purpose of executing the deeds.

"The mayor-domo, having performed the business that brought him to Córdova, while I was engaged with Mäestro Tintéro, met me at the escrivanía, and proposed to shew me the city, which I had scarcely as yet seen. As we were returning to Bella-Vista, through the Barrio de la Catedràl, I noticed a placard posted up in a conspicuous situation, announcing to the inhabitants of Córdova and the public in general, that a grand bull-feast was to take place on the Sunday following, being the festival of Nuestra Señora del Carmen. As I had as yet seen no exhibition of this kind, except those in the Llanos, in which I had often taken part, I expressed an earnest wish to

be present at this. I was agreeably surprised, by the mayor-domo's informing me, that Don Sebastian had a private box in the Coliséo de Toros; and that he rarely missed an opportunity of being present at a bull-fight, unless when prevented by serious illness.

"When we assembled at dinner, where I met several guests, as before, Don Sebastian announced his intention of witnessing the *toréo*, together with his daughter; and invited all his guests, who had not already engaged balconies, to accompany him in his own, which was large, and well situated for seeing the spectacle and the company. The conversation, during dinner, turned entirely on some new *t readóres*, who had lately arrived from Arragòn, and were to make their first appearance at Córdova, on the approaching festival. on of the corregidor of that city, one of the visitors at Bella-Vista, gave Don Sebastian, who evidently took great interest in it, a minute and critical account of the new performers; and informed us, that his father had joined the chief alcalde, in procuring a set of the best bulls that had been turned into the arena for some years.

I was once addressed by my grand-uncle on the subject; but unluckily betrayed my unacquaintance with the technical terms used in the European *toréo*, and was obliged to confess my utter ignorance, which I could easily perceive mortified Don Sebastian, and excited the surprise and contempt of most of the guests. Doña Isidóra observed my embarrassment, and kindly relieved it, by engaging me in conversation with her, until all retired as

usual at the siesta. The ensuing evening was a repetition of the preceding; and had it not been for the mornings, which were passed in company with Doña Isidóra and Fray Ignacio, I should have been insufferably tired of my visit to Bella-Vista.

"The day at length arrived, that had been appointed for the toréo; and, as I had by this time become acquainted with some young cavalléros who occasionally visited at Bella-Vista, it was arranged that I should ride with them to attend high mass at the cathedral of Córdova, and dine at the corregidor's, who had invited a numerous party on the occasion of the bull-feast. In the afternoon, we adjourned to the Coliséo, which was already crowded; and I was introduced by the corregidòr's son into the arena, which, I found, was a favorite lounge for the young men of family belonging to the city, previous to the entry of the bulls, and during the intervals between the fights.

"I must own I was enchanted at the novel and beautiful sight, which I now beheld for the first time, of a crowded amphitheatre, each balcony of which was filled with Andalusían ladies, whom you must admit to be the loveliest in Spain. The dark colour of their peculiar dress heightened the effect of their fair features; and the simple elegance of their head-dress,—few having more than a sprig of jasmin, or a clavel in their hair,—surprised and enchanted me. It was some time before I could distinguish Don Sebastian's box; at length I recognised the tall stately figure of the old colonel, surrounded by a circle of friends, to whom he was

talking with all the animation of youth. Doña Isidóra, who sat behind him, made me a sign to join her party; and I had scarcely entered the balcony, when the first trumpet sounded, for the arena to be cleared.

"You have seen so many toréos, camarada, that it is needless to describe this. I must, however, observe that, although the toreadóres of Arragòn displayed considerable skill and agility, I could not think them comparable to the Llanéros."

"*Vaya amigo!*" said La Torre; "I give you full licence to boast of your countrymen to-day; and even to cry '*Viva la Patria!*' should you feel inclined. I must confess we cut a most contemptible figure just now, when Morillo, in his wisdom, sent us skulking into the bush, from whence Pãez literally smoked us out. I had positively half a mind to turn insurgent myself, when we were bearded in that manner by a handful of undisciplined wild men of the plains, and were not permitted to cross lances with them. But proceed, and let us hear the remainder of thy tale."

"I have little more to say, but that this bull-fight unexpectedly decided my future destiny. Several bulls had already been killed; not however before they had disabled the usual proportion of men and horses. The professed toreadóres, and a number of amateurs, had also performed their feats in the name of some lady or other present, as is customary; but Doña Isidóra had been unaccountably neglected, although she was certainly entitled, by her station in society, to this mark of

respect. Don Sebastian was far too proud to appear to notice this slight; but I could easily perceive that it was not a little galling to his parental affection, as well as to his pride of birth, to hear the names of the corregidor's and alcalde's daughters, and those of other distinguished families, successively proclaimed in the arena, while his own was not mentioned, even by a hired toreadòr.

" I happened to be holding Doña Isidóra's scarf, which she had thrown off on account of the heat; and I suddenly resolved to try a *suerte* or two in her name. I therefore left the balcony unobserved, without disclosing my intention to any one; and having obtained a short sword from the matadòr, entered the arena just at the moment a fresh and vigorous bull had been turned in. After saluting the governor, as I had observed that the other amateurs had done, I gave notice in the usual form, —'*Vaya! á la salud de Dona Isidóra Castro de Bäeza!*'—an announcement which drew on me the eager attention, not only of Don Sebastian, but of all those who were aware of the relationship between us, and knew that I was a creole of South America. I soon contrived to provoke the bull, with Doña Isidóra's scarf, which I still carried; and he instantly attacked me vigorously. The toréo, however, had been one of my favorite amusements, while residing with my cousins at Merricúri; and I found little difficulty in acquitting myself to the satisfaction of the spectators, who thought proper to applaud my dexterity, with shouts of—'*Viva la casa de Castro!*'

"It would be difficult to give you an adequate idea of Don Sebastian's surprise and exultation at my unexpected knight-errantry. Like most proud men, he affected to despise the acclamations of the multitude, while he was unconsciously flattered to the utmost, in his heart, by this tribute (as he conceived it) to the popularity of his family, of which he was punctiliously jealous. When I left the aréna, and again joined the party in his palco, Don Sebastian received me with the greatest cordiality; rising, as well as his infirmity would permit, and stretching his hand out to me over two or three rows of seats. From that very moment, his behaviour was totally altered towards me. Instead of being chilled by the cold formality of manner, which had rendered my residence at Bella-Vista so irksome to me, I became at once a highly distinguished favorite. My grand-uncle appeared never so happy as when he had me in close attendance on him; and few things could gratify him more, than the flattering compliments occasionally addressed to me, by such of his numerous visitors as were present at the bull-feast.

"Doña Isidóra, and my friend the chaplain, observed with pleasure his increasing partiality; which they endeavoured to strengthen by every means in their power. It is true that, although I felt proud of his approbation, I was now compelled to pass many tedious hours with him in his own apartment; listening, or at least seeming to attend, to his interminable stories of his regiment, and, to me, most uninteresting anecdotes of the court of Carlos 4to. He even took the trouble to instruct

me in the game of *cháquete*, in which I became his constant opponent in the evenings, as much to Fray Ignacio's relief, as to my secret annoyance.

"Another circumstance occurred, which completely established me in my grand-uncle's good graces, and evidently counteracted every ill impression he had received of my countrymen; at least in my case. His grooms were attempting to break in a fine young Andalusian horse, of his own breeding, which proved so unusually spirited, as to set all their endeavours at defiance. It had already hurt one or two of them severely; and the head groom, who doubtless had some private interest in the animal being sold, reported it to be incorrigibly vicious. Don Sebastian had already given orders for it to be disposed of, at whatever price it would bring, to a contractor for supplying the cavalry, when I asked permission to try my skill in breaking it in. My grand-uncle readily gave his consent, as he was inclined to place great confidence in my activity, from the former specimen he had seen of my Llanéro accomplishments, in the bull-ring. Instead of using the complicated trappings employed in the European *manége*, I made a *tapójo* and *cabestro*, such as are used in Venezuela, and soon succeeded in rendering the horse perfectly docile.

"The escrivano, Mäestro Tomas Tintéro, had been diligently employed, meanwhile, in executing the commission I had given him. He found little difficulty in procuring me to be acknowledged as legitimate owner of the small estate, to which I became entitled on my father's death. It consisted chiefly of vineyards, and was in the possession of a

wealthy peasant, to whom I renewed the lease, which was on the point of expiring. I received from him a considerable sum of money, as well for the arrears of rent, which my father had not claimed for several years, as for the fine usually paid on the renewal of a lease.

" A couple of months speedily elapsed, in the usual routine of Bella-Vista; and I received a letter from Don Gaspàr Herréra's super-cargo, at Cadiz, acquainting me that he proposed returning to South America, sooner than he had anticipated. An opportunity offered, by a ship that was to sail for Vera Cruz in Mexico, touching in its way at Caraccas: he had already secured his passage in her, and advised me to join him in a week at farthest, as the ship would be ready for sea before the end of the month.

" When I communicated the substance of this letter to Don Sebastian, he at once told me, that he could not think of parting with me. He reminded me, that although I had the misfortune (as he called it) to be born in the colonies, my father was a native of Spain; and that he himself, as my nearest relative by the father's side, had undoubtedly the best right to be consulted, as to my choice of a profession and place of residence. He also told me plainly that, as his estates were not entailed, I had better consider seriously, before I determined on forfeiting his favour, and the good opinion he had formed of me, so irrecoverably, as I certainly should by persisting in my intention of returning to Venezuela, and, above all, by entering into the mercantile line.

" On consideration, I could easily perceive, that it was for my interest to be guided by my grand-uncle's wishes; independently of my own inclination to see more of Europe than had as yet been in my power. I therefore thanked him for the favourable opinion he entertained of me, and declared my willingness to follow his advice; venturing at the same time to hint, that I was desirous of having an opportunity of distinguishing myself in some profession, and that I had the greatest aversion to a life of inactivity. He then informed me that, having personally witnessed proofs of my courage and gallantry, (meaning doubtless my *debut* at the bull-feast) he had made an humble offer of my services to his catholic majesty, through Fernando's former preceptor, the Duque de San Carlos, who was then at the head of affairs, and with whom Don Sebastian had been formerly on terms of intimacy. The king had been graciously pleased to return a favourable answer; and my grand-uncle was in daily expectation of the arrival of my appointment, as alférez in some regiment. This piece of good fortune he meant to have kept secret, until he could have the satisfaction of surprising me, by presenting me with a commission; but he could no longer conceal it, as he doubted not that it would at once put all thoughts of returning to Venezuela out of my head.

" I returned Don Sebastian suitable and sincere acknowledgments for his exertions in my behalf; thanking him with a warmth of expression, that would have been sufficient to convince him of my cheerful acquiescence in his choice of a profession

for me, had he been capable of entertaining the least doubt on the subject. To confess the truth, I was agreeably surprised by this intelligence; and waited impatiently for the arrival of the promised commission. I wrote immediately to my former companion, the super-cargo, acquainting him with my determination to remain in Europe; and sent by him a letter to Don Gaspàr, in which I fully explained my situation and prospects, in a manner which, I was well aware, was certain of meeting his approbation. I also forwarded a large packet for my uncle and cousins at Merricúri; giving them a detailed account of my adventures, and expressing my regret, that I should not have it in my power to revisit them so soon as I had expected.

" My commission at length arrived, and I found myself appointed alférez in the regiment of Huzares de Numancia; receiving at the same time the *patente* of Don, which had been conferred on me through Don Sebastian's interest with the prime minister. I should otherwise have found considerable difficulty in obtaining the latter, even by purchase; for the creoles of the discontented colonies had latterly found very little favour at court. Frequent and long were the lectures the worthy old colonel read me, previous to my departure, respecting the line of conduct proper to be pursued by me, on this my entrance into the world; and he was no less sententious in particularly explaining to me the routine and etiquette of my new profession. He insisted on fitting me out completely; and, among other proofs of his regard, presented me with his own sword, which was an antique blade of the true

Toledo pattern, made by the celebrated Andres el herréro, with his motto—

'NO ME SAQUES SIN RAZON!
'NO ME ENVAYNES SIN HONOR!'

engraved on it. You will easily suppose that I was obliged to procure a sabre of a more modern fashion, before I could appear on parade; but I took care not to affront my grand-uncle by acknowledging it.

"Every thing being at length in readiness, and having taken an affectionate leave of Don Sebastian, his daughter, and my friend Fray Ignacio, I joined the regiment of Numancia, which was at that time in actual service in the neighbourhood of Velez Malaga, against some guerilla corps which were in arms in that part of the country. I passed two years in that regiment, very much to my satisfaction, the colonel being an old brother officer of my grand-uncle; and occasionally obtained leave, through him, to pass a few weeks at Bella-Vista. Don Sebastian, who continued to take as warm an interest in my welfare, as if I had been his son, obtained my promotion, as Lieutenant in the corps to which I now belong, and in which I had first the pleasure of forming your acquaintance. We have been so constantly together, since that time, that I have nothing farther to relate, but what you must already know."

"*Mil gracias, camarada!* And now tell me, seriously, how you mean to proceed to obtain an interview with your cousin Juanita. I take it for granted, that is the great object with you at present."

"I must, in the first place, endeavour to ascertain where my uncle Silvestre's family has taken refuge. Then, if I can only contrive to get a note privately conveyed to Juanita, appointing any particular part of the savanna, where our meeting would be unattended with danger to her;—she is, I know, a fearless rider, and I am almost confident she would be prevailed on to venture there."

"Meanwhile, rely on my promise of providing you with a messenger, if possible. But I hear the bugles of the *retréta* sounding in the camp; and it is high time for me to send out the patroles. *Hasta luego, amigo!*"

CHAPTER VI.

THE EMIGRANT'S RETREAT.

There had the tribe a safe asylum found
Amid those marshes wide and woodlands dense,
With pathless wilds and waters spread around,
And labyrinthine swamps, a sure defence
From human foes.

Southey.

THE Llanéros, Gomez and Gamarra, whom Päez had detached with each a son, rode at a rapid pace and in silence across the savanna. Both the fathers were occupied with anxious thoughts for the fate of their wives and children, whom they were now about to lead forth from their comfortable habitations, to encounter all the hardships attending the wandering life of emigrants.

They arrived about sunset at Gamarra's hato; and were received with embraces and tears, by the anxious group assembled on the watch for them. An addition had been already made to the party

since the morning, by the arrival of the Cura of Guadualito, Don Manuel Quadras, with his widowed sister and her two daughters, who had also been compelled to fly from the impending storm of war. No time was to be lost in making the necessary arrangements for leaving the farm. The men therefore killed a calf, which they left to the women to cut up and roast, as provision for the road; and, assisted by their sons, drove into the *corrál* a herd of horses and mules from the neighbouring pastures. They noosed, with the lazo, as many of the quietest animals among them as were required; and saddled them in readiness for the journey. They also caught a couple of strong mules, and girthed pack-saddles on them, to convey such few articles of property, as could conveniently be carried away.

They then assembled together, to take their last melancholy meal in the long room, which had so often resounded with their merriment, on former festive occasions of meeting in it. Having joined the Cura in the usual evening "Oracion á la Virgen," the whole party set out, followed by the dogs of both farm-houses, which appeared to be conscious that something extraordinary had taken place; for, although they were of the ferocious Cumanà breed, they mingled together on terms of sullen truce, interrupted occasionally by a few jealous growls. The only paths leading through these extensive savannas to the lagoon of Cunavichi, or indeed in any direction towards the interior, are mere cattle tracks, worn by the wild herds in their progress from one part of the plains

to another. As these would only admit one horse at a time, little or no opportunity was allowed the wanderers of conversing together. Gamarra led the way, with his carbine unslung in readiness, in case of coming suddenly on a panther, and steering his course through the wilds by the moon and stars; while Gomez brought up the rear, driving before him the baggage mules, and whistling the Llanéro tune—"De los Generales qual es el valiente?" &c. [6]

Towards midnight, they arrived at a clump of palm trees, near which was a pool of water; and, as the women complained of fatigue, it was determined on to rest here, and allow the horses and mules to graze until morning. The men and boys agreed to relieve each other as centinels—the Cura being of course exempt;—and a fire having been kindled, as a protection against panthers and jaguars, all but the youngest lad, whose turn it was to watch first, were shortly fast asleep.

At daybreak they continued their flight; and it was not until after sunset, on the third evening from leaving the hato, that they arrived at the spot chosen by Päez for the abode of the emigrants, during the time the Spanish army should continue in the Llanos. Numerous fires were already kindled under the spreading Congria trees; and most of the families were engaged in chaunting the vesper song of "Salud Maria!" As darkness rapidly succeeds sunset in this climate, it was too late to attempt raising any temporary shelter for the females and children; they were therefore obliged once more to bivouac in the open air. The next morning, however, Gomez and Gamarra,

with the assistance of their sons, built huts of bambu and palm leaves for their families, and that of the Cura of Guadualíto. They then took an affectionate leave of their wives and children; and returned to join Päez's army, at the appointed rendezvous, in the savanna of Caña Fistola.

The two mothers, Mercédes and Paulíta, having arranged their humble ranchos in the most comfortable manner possible, set out together on a tour round their new place of residence, at which between four and five hundred families had already assembled. The forest of lofty Congria and Cäujera trees, which borders the lagoon of Cunavíchi, opening in various parts, forms beautiful glades, covered with a short soft grass. Päez had selected one of the most retired of these. The only possible way of approaching it,—for pathway there was none,—was by winding through an intricate labyrinth of marshes, and repeatedly fording deep branches of the lagoon, which swarmed with alligators, and was overgrown with reeds. Most of the newly-arrived families had erected ranchos under the trees; and, as all had been followed by their dogs, and many had driven herds of cows with them from the neighbouring savannas, the place had already the appearance of an extensive and populous village. Some were busy milking; others, who had taken the precaution to bring the necessary utensils with them, were pounding maiz, in large wooden mortars, with heavy *majaderos*; or were baking *arépas*, on broad earthen plates. A large party of the younger females was assembled, at the banks of the lagoon, for the pur-

pose of washing the linen of their respective families; and their incessant clamour, and the peals of laughter that echoed through the wood, proved that their emigration by no means preyed so heavily on their spirits, as might have been expected. Pãez's wife, Doña Rosãura, occupied one of the largest ranchos. It had been prepared for her reception, with more than usual attention to comfort, by a party of the Guardia de Honor, which had volunteered for that service. The Llanéros, indeed, showed on all occasions the greatest regard for "*La Senora*," as they generally styled her. She did not owe this partiality merely to the circumstance of being their favorite chieftain's wife; but her education was so far superior to that of all around her, while, at the same time, she was so unassuming and uniformly kind to every one, that they looked up to her with feelings of unqualified respect and admiration.

She was a native of San Carlos, in the province of Caraccas, where it borders on Varínas; and her family was superior to that of Pãez, to whom she was married before the commencement of the revolution in Venezuela. When her husband joined the standard of independence, she followed him to the Llanos; but never remained with the army, as she preferred enjoying a life of retirement, at a small plantation, on the banks of the Cabullári. Here she occupied herself entirely in the education of her two infant sons, rarely visited by Pãez; for his pursuits and habits were so totally opposite to those of Doña Rosãura, that, although he was incapable of feeling indifference towards her, there was

an evident coolness and constraint in his manner, when in her company, that could not fail to give her, who loved him with an enthusiastic and devoted attachment, deep cause for sorrow.

She was now surrounded by groups of Llanèras, who had been always accustomed to apply to her for advice and assistance in their minor afflictions; they accordingly felt confident that her presence, although she was involved, no less than them, in the common calamity, was in some measure a protection to them. With the assistance of the Cura de Guadualíto, she gradually succeeded in calming the excessive apprehensions of the emigrants, who had been terrified by the loneliness of the wood in which they had sought shelter; and who, instead of endeavouring to encourage each other, had assiduously exaggerated, in their gossiping meetings, the dangers to which they were likely to be exposed, during the absence of their husbands and sons. She reminded them of the morasses that surrounded the lagoon of Cunavíchi, and which, as they themselves had with difficulty found their way through them, might be confidently trusted to, as an insurmountable barrier against the advance of an invading army. She assured them that Pãez's vigilance could not be eluded by the Spaniards, now that they were in the open savanna; and that he would doubtless find an opportunity of warning the emigrants, in time for them to retreat still farther into the wilds, should Morillo, by any unforeseen event, become acquainted with their place of concealment.

A numerous herd of cows, with their calves,

was driven to El Congrial, (as this remote wood was called,) by Pāez's orders, and apportioned to the different families, which had been compelled to leave their hatos in too great haste to admit of their bringing cattle with them. The emigrants became familiarised, by degrees, with their novel situation; and their daily occupations went on, in as nearly as possible the same routine, as when they were in the peaceable possession of their farms. Spinning with the *huzo*, or distaff and spindle, is more the amusement, than the serious employment, of South American females of all classes. As abundance of wild cotton is to be collected in the woods on the banks of the Orinoco, spinning and weaving it became the constant occupation of the grown people during the day; while the children dispersed themselves in different directions, in search of wild fruits and turtles' eggs. These last are found in such quantities on the sand banks, as to form an important article of commerce among the Orinoco Indians; who dry them in the sun for winter provisions, and find means to extract a good limpid oil from them, with which they supply the different Missionary establishments on the river.

In the evenings, after "*La Oracion*," in which all regularly joined, the vihuelas and wild national songs were heard from various parts of the wood, under which the huts were built. A numerous party always assembled round Doña Rosāura's rancho; where, after discussing the latest news from the army, which she was, of course, the first to receive, she encouraged them to pass away the evenings by relating tales, of which most Llanèras

possess a good stock. It is, indeed, almost an indispensable accomplishment for them, during the tedious months of the annual rains, when each hato is insulated by the inundation of the savannas.

Padre Manuel Quadras, who was one of the first to propose this evening amusement, agreed to set the example, by commencing with the following narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPECTRE OF THE CORDILLERA.

" The Glacier's cold and restless mass
" Moves onward, day by day;
" But I am he who bids it pass,
" Or with its ice delay.
" I am the Spirit of the place,
" Could make the mountain bow,
" And quiver to his cavern'd base!"

Manfred.

" I WAS educated for the church, at the college of La Compañia in Bogotà, under the care of Fray Ambrosio Monzàl, the principal of the Jesuits, in New Grenáda; a man who, although banished from South America, by a subsequent decree, which prohibited the society of Loyola's disciples from residing in the Spanish colonies, is still remembered with respect and esteem by all who studied under his auspices. The bishop of Bogotà, who placed great and deserved confidence in Fray Ambrosio, invariably attended to his recommendations of such of his pupils as had arrived at the sacred distinction of the tonsure, and gave them the preferenc

over all other candidates, in his appointments to Curátos in his diocess. As soon as I had gone through the usual course of studies in the college, I was presented to the bishop, with favourable testimonials of my qualifications. I was immediately ordained; and, after officiating for some years as supernumerary chaplain at the cathedral of Bogotá, I was appointed to the Curáto of Guadualíto in lower Varínas. This village had not until then received a priest; the inhabitants previously attending the churches of Betolles or Achaguas, as best suited their convenience.

"Although it was late in the season, my anxiety to comply with the bishop's injunctions, which were to proceed with as little delay as possible to my parish, caused me totally to disregard the cautions of such of my acquaintances as had visited Venezuela. They united in assuring me, that the Cordilléra of the Andes, which separates the Llanos from New Grenáda, was not to be crossed at any time of the year without incurring very great danger; but that, towards winter, it would be the height of madness to attempt it. They warned me that no mules, however strong and sure-footed, could then pass the chain of mountains; and that I should find it impossible to obtain a guide bold enough to venture with me; even if I should be so imprudent as to persist in endeavouring to perform the perilous journey on foot. I nevertheless turned an incredulous ear to most of the frightful anecdotes, that each of my friends was anxious to relate to me, of passengers who had perished on the *Paramos;* [7] rashly concluding, that all such dismal

accounts must have been greatly exaggerated, for the express purpose of alarming me, and deterring me from my purpose.

"I purchased two good mules, of the excellent breed for which the valley of Zogamozo is famous; one for my own riding, and the other to carry my baggage; and I hired an active intelligent mountaineer, by name Julian Roxas, to attend me on foot; for that is the usual way of travelling among the lower orders, in New Grenáda. As I proceeded by easy stages, as well on account of my peon and the mules, as for my own sake (this being my first long excursion); and as I rested several days at Chiquinquirá, Zogamozo, and Tunja, I was rather more than a month on my journey to the village of Cheva, at the foot of the Cordilléra. The rainy season had already set in; and the lower branches of the Andes were scarcely ever free from a thick canopy of clouds; while the gigantic peaks, which crown the summit, wrapped in their splendid mantles of snow, appeared to oppose an insurmountable barrier to any farther progress.

"The Cura of Cheva, at whose house I was hospitably received, endeavoured, by every argument he could think of, to dissuade me from my resolution, but in vain. I could now plainly perceive, that the attempt to cross the mountains would be attended with considerable danger, although I was not as yet thoroughly aware of its extent; but I was then young, and felt ashamed of retracting, after having arrived so far on my journey. Besides, the funds with which my parents had provided me, had been nearly exhausted by the

necessary purchases that I had been obliged to make, as well as by the expences of the road, moderate as they then were; and would not have admitted of my remaining where I was, until the return of spring. I therefore determined on passing the Paramo of Pisba at all hazards; and took the opportunity of accompanying a wandering tribe of Cachirì Indians, who were crossing the Andes, for the purpose of spending the winter in the temperate plains of Cazanares.

"Having provided a tolerable supply of maiz cakes and dried venison, I left Cheva, with my peon Julian, and about twenty Cachirìs with their wives and children. After three days' journey, ascending and descending the lower range of the Cordilléra, during which we had to pass several scarcely fordable torrents, we came to one of those swinging bridges, called *tarrabitas*, which had not at all entered into my calculations. I had never before seen one of these perilous modes of crossing the mountain gulfs; and, although I had often heard of them, I had by no means formed an adequate idea of their terrible appearance.

"The chasm before us was about a bow-shot in breadth; and appeared, from the precipitous nature of its rocky sides, to have been rent by one of those mighty earthquakes, by which even the gigantic Cordilléra is sometimes shaken to its base. Through the bottom of this gulf, a mountain torrent had burst its way, and could be seen plainly as it foamed down the twilight abyss; although its roaring could but faintly reach the ear at such a distance. The sides were thinly planted with

scattered shrubs and creeping plants, with here and there a dwarf mountain palm tree, which could scarcely find root in the fissures of the rock; but, on the top, majestic cedars bent over the brink of the precipices on each side.

"A stout rope, formed of twisted thongs of untanned bull's hide, was extended across the chasm; but as it was impossible to draw this heavy *zoga* tight, and it was constantly kept moist by the rains, which incessantly fall during the whole of the year in these mountain forests, it drooped considerably in the middle, forming a large segment of a circle. The *tarrabita*, a sort of cradle made of wicker-work, apparently much decayed by damp, was slung to this zoga, traversing on it by means of large pullies, as it was hauled backwards and forwards by long ropes of twisted grass. As this was an unusual season of the year for travellers to attempt the passage of the Andes, the Indian family, whose business it was to attend to the hanging bridge, and who lived during the greater part of the year in a small rancho, on the opposite bank to where I now was, had retired for the winter to a village on the other side of the Paramo. Previously to their departure, they had drawn the tarrabita up to their side of the chasm, where it was secured to the cedar tree, by which the zoga hung suspended.

"I at first supposed that our farther progress was put a stop to, especially as the Indians crouched down with their usual appearance of sullen apathy, as if resolved not to stir from thence until compelled by hunger; but my peon Julian, who was

better acquainted with their manners, advised me to wait with patience until the result of their deliberation should appear. After they had gazed for some minutes, in perfect silence, at the unexpected obstacle, one of the most active among them threw off his poncho and sandals, and taking firm hold of the zoga, threw his legs across it, and commenced making his way along it in that manner, hanging of course under the rope. Severe exertion was doubtless necessary for him to maintain his hold, in spite of the vibration of the zoga; and after he had passed the centre, and began to ascend, he became evidently fatigued, and could with difficulty proceed. His companions, meanwhile, did not address the least word of encouragement to him; but continued smoking their churumbélas with apparent indifference. He at length succeeded, by a violent effort, in reaching the roots of a tree which hung over the precipice; and transferred his hold to them, climbing by their assistance to the top of the cliff, where he lay down completely exhausted.

"When he had rested himself, he loosened the tarrabita; and having launched it from the bank, the Indians on our side pulled it over to us. We found in it the slings and straps used for transporting cattle across; which relieved me from the apprehension I lay under, of being compelled to leave my mules here; as I could form no idea of the means by which they were to be got over. I bribed the Indians, by a present of some tobacco, to assist me in passing them, before we ourselves should cross; for Julian warned me that, if I suf-

fered the men to go over first, they would probably make the best of their way, and leave me to shift for myself. I have since seen enough of their constitutional indolence, and habit of depending every one on his own exertions, to be convinced that such would have been actually the case.

"The Indians, however, explained to me the necessity there was for two of them crossing, that they might assist their kinsman in pulling the mules over. I assented to this; and, when two stout Cachiris had passed, the rest unslung the tarrabíta, and leading one of my mules under that part of the hide-rope, that was fastened to the trunk of a cedar near the edge of the chasm, they blindfolded it, and slung it to the pullies. The three Indians, who had already crossed, pulled the mule towards them, by means of the line which had been fastened to the tarrabíta; and those on our side having forced the animal off the bank on which it stood, it descended with fearful rapidity to the centre of the zoga. It was then hauled up, by those on the other side, and unslung. They repeated this operation with the remaining mule; and lastly we crossed by pairs, in the tarrabíta, without an accident.

"As the crossing had taken up the remainder of the day, we determined to rest for the night in the hut belonging to the keeper of the tarrabíta. The weather, although rainy, had hitherto been comparatively mild; but at nightfall, the increasing gusts of wind, and the indistinct muttering of distant thunder, warned us of the approach of a winter storm. It came on with such fearful rapi-

dity, that in a few minutes it was at its height. The wind howled among the tops of the cedars, under which the rancho where we had taken shelter was built, bending and agitating them, as if they had been pliant saplings; while the lightning at intervals illuminated the whole forest, playing about the trunks of the trees, and appearing to fill the hut into which all the Indians had crowded. The peals of thunder instantaneously followed each flash; and shook the solid ground beneath us, with scarcely any intermission. We were actually in the midst of the tempest; for we had not as yet ascended above the usual level of the clouds.

"Never had I witnessed so awful a scene. The Indians, notwithstanding their habitual apathy, could not behold it with their ordinary composure. As flash after flash blazed through every crevice in the frail habitation, their dark features were seen marked with a ghastly expression of terror, quite foreign to their customary proud look of indifference. I took from my trunk a small image of San Antonio, all powerful in storms, and prostrated myself before it, calling on all present to accompany me in prayer to the saint. Julian alone obeyed my exhortation; for the Cachirls, who still retain traces of idolatry, worship through fear a dæmon, whom they believe to be the origin of all evil, more especially among the wild passes of the Cordilléra. In spite of my remonstrances, they continued to mutter their unhallowed incantations to the "*Vulto de los Andes*," whose habitation they suppose to be in the craters of extinguished volcanos, which are to be found on most Paramos; and whom they be-

lieve to delight in riding on the thunder-cloud, to the destruction of bewildered wanderers, who have dared to approach his solitary dominions.

"Morning at length came, and the thunder ceased; but the wind and rain still continued violent. When I proposed to set forward on our journey, the Cachiris expressed great unwillingness to proceed as yet; for they declared that the Paramo was still angry. I learned from Julian, that even the converts among the Indians believe so firmly in the existence and malicious attributes of the *Vulto*, that they hurry along those solitary passes in the loftiest ridges, called Paramos, which they consider as the peculiar abodes of the evil spirits, in silence, and without looking up from the path. If they are surprised by a storm, when on the summit, they invariably sacrifice some of their ornaments, or even their stock of provisions, and the greater part of their clothing, to the dreaded dæmon, by throwing them down a chasm of the rocks, or into the deep black-looking lagoon, which is always to be found among the highest peaks.

"I at length succeeded in prevailing on them to leave the rancho, which could scarcely merit the name of shelter, as it was merely constructed for a summer habitation, and was but slightly thatched with wild plantain leaves, admitting the rain in many parts. The difficulties and dangers of the road now increased tenfold. The slippery path wound along the edge of precipices; and was generally so narrow, that I could no longer trust to my mule. I therefore dismounted, not without the greatest risk, as there was barely room for me to

alight; and led it slowly along by the bridle. It was a fortunate precaution on my part; for I had not proceeded far, when the animal stumbled over a loose stone, and not having sufficient space to recover its footing, rolled over the precipice, in spite of my efforts to assist it, and disappeared in an instant down the abyss beneath. The baggage mule, which was the strongest of the two, still proceeded, though evidently much fatigued, under the care of my peon; but Julian shook his head despondingly, in answer to my enquiries, if he thought the animal could possibly reach the other side of the Cordilléra.

" We at length emerged from the shelter that the forest had hitherto afforded us; and entered on the Paramo, a bare rocky pass of some miles in extent, in which the snow, that completely shrouded all other parts of the mountain, was prevented from accumulating, by the violence of the sweeping blasts, which howl incessantly along it. There was no longer any beaten track; but the Indians readily found their way over the broken craggy ground, by the bones of men and beasts which we saw at every step bleaching in the chilly blast. The baggage mule, weakened by his previous exertions, fell in attempting to cross a steep smooth rock; and nothing could compel him to rise. I was therefore obliged to abandon the greater part of my baggage; for the Cachiris were with difficulty persuaded to carry the provisions, and part of my clothing, but could not be prevailed on to save the *almofréz* that contained my bed, nor a single book of the small library, which I had selected with such

care for my solace in retirement, and valued so highly.

"We had left the tarrabitéro's hut late in the morning, and the rays of the setting sun now threw our shadows far before us, when the Indians, who had continued to hurry along, at a pace which threatened more than once to leave me behind, suddenly stopped, and crouching to the earth, began again to mutter in their own language the same invocations, apparently, that they had used during the thunder-storm. I endeavoured to ascertain the meaning of this; but only received for answer,—"*El Vulto!*"—repeated in a low tone of impatience and displeasure at the question. Julian, who appeared to partake, in no small degree, of their terrors, crossing himself devoutly and repeating his rosario, called my attention to a gigantic shadow, bearing a rude resemblance to the human form, which appeared and vanished alternately, as the light clouds flitted across the pass. I must confess, that I at first felt considerable alarm, at what seemed a supernatural apparition; until I recollected having read of a similar phenomenon, witnessed by travellers among the Andes near Quito, which was caused by the human shadow being projected against the passing vapour, at day-break or sunset.

"This explanation was far from satisfying Julian, nor could I reason him out of his belief, that he had seen the dreaded Genius of the Cordilléra, face to face. He merely replied, that I certainly ought to know best; but that a similar vision never failed to forebode misfortune. As to the Cachirls, it was in vain to think of arguing against their prejudice;

nor did I think it prudent, considering how much I stood in need of their assistance, to irritate them by attempting it: for I was assured by my peon, that they have a superstitious dread of being in the company of a priest or friar when among the mountains; and I could perceive that they looked on me with an expression of dislike, as if I were the sole cause of the spectre's making himself visible.

"The sun sank beneath the horizon; and the *Vulto* appeared no more. The Indians then rose from their posture of adoration, and hurried along the Paramo. As we proceeded across the unsheltered ridge, the wind became so violent, and the cold so benumbing, that we were in many places compelled to creep on our hands and knees, and even occasionally to lie flat, through dread of being swept over the precipice by the fury of the gusts. The air became often obscured by whirlwinds of snow; and we were at length compelled to halt until the moon should rise, and rest ourselves, meanwhile, under the shelter of some lofty peaks of granite, which rose abruptly, like the ruins of some ancient fortress. Several of the Indians separated in search of fuel; as some of the women and children were so thoroughly chilled by the cold, as to be almost incapable of walking. Although not even a blade of grass was to be seen, nor any signs of vegetation, except moss and lichens, they soon contrived to kindle a fire, with fragments of saddle-trees, pieces of packing cases, and dry bones, both of horses and men.

"As we crowded cowering over it, we were surprised by the arrival of some Cachiris who had

lieve to delight in riding on the thunder-cloud, to the destruction of bewildered wanderers, who have dared to approach his solitary dominions.

"Morning at length came, and the thunder ceased; but the wind and rain still continued violent. When I proposed to set forward on our journey, the Cachiris expressed great unwillingness to proceed as yet; for they declared that the Paramo was still angry. I learned from Julian, that even the converts among the Indians believe so firmly in the existence and malicious attributes of the *Vulto*, that they hurry along those solitary passes in the loftiest ridges, called Paramos, which they consider as the peculiar abodes of the evil spirits, in silence, and without looking up from the path. If they are surprised by a storm, when on the summit, they invariably sacrifice some of their ornaments, or even their stock of provisions, and the greater part of their clothing, to the dreaded dæmon, by throwing them down a chasm of the rocks, or into the deep black-looking lagoon, which is always to be found among the highest peaks.

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" Early in the morning, we succeeded in reaching a ruined tambo, in the highest part of the forest; and the next day but one, which we spent in the woods, we arrived at the village of Las Salínas. Here I rested for some days, to recover from the fatigue and agitation I had undergone; firmly resolving never again to attempt passing the Cordilléra, in winter."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PATRIOT CAMP.—THE NIGHT ATTACK.—GUERRA A LA MUERTE.

"But when the field
"Was won, and they who had escaped the fight
"Had yielded up their arms, it was foul work
"To glut on the defenceless prisoners
"The blunted sword of conquest!"

Joan of Arc.

PAEZ found on his arrival at Caujaràl with his Guardia de Honor, that Zaraza had already obeyed his instructions, and had removed with the remainder of the cavalry to the more open plain of Caña Fistola, from whence the approach of an enemy in any direction might be seen. The next morning, therefore, Pãez set off to join him; and arrived towards afternoon at the rude encampment;—if an assemblage of soldiers belonging to different corps, mingled together without order or regularity, deserved that name.

This was invariably the case, when the veteran chief, Zaraza, commonly known in the patriot army, by the familiar name of *El Tahita Cordilléra*, in allusion to the whiteness of his hair, was in com-

mand. He was by far the oldest of the Venezuelan generals, and had been indefatigable in his opposition to the royalists, from the earliest days of the revolution, before even Bolívar's name became at all known. When Monteverde reconquered Caraccas, and Bolívar, then a colonel in the patriot service, was compelled to fly for a time from the Main, Zaráza kept together the remains of the scattered army, in the provinces of Cumaná and Barcelona, and persisted in harassing the royalists. Nevertheless, in consequence of his inveterate prejudices against all military forms, which had discipline for their object, his own troops had all the habits and appearance of a guerilla; and, when in temporary command of another general's army, he invariably was the means of introducing irregularity and disorder.

Pãez, having dismissed his guard, rode with a few of his usual attendants to the part of the camp where Zaráza was quartered; and found him busily employed, cooking his ration of beef on a wooden spit, at a fire surrounded by officers and privates of his own corps, who were mingled in apparent equality.

"'*Norabuena, Tahita Cordillêra!*" exclaimed Pãez as he dismounted; "Fine discipline you maintain among your Rotozos! and a pretty example of subordination you are showing my Llanéros!"

This attack on his prejudices, and, still worse, the slighting term *rotozos*, applied to his troops, whom he considered, and always called his sons, effectually disturbed the composure of the old chief, as Pãez had designed.

"*Malhay, con cien demonios!* I could have sworn, niño Jose Antonio, that the first word I should hear, on your arrival, would be discipline. That, and subordination, are all that you and Simòn Bolívar think of; and much good have they done both of ye! Bolívar, with his *discipline*, has been defeated by Morillo, at La Puerta;—nearly lanced in his hammock, by Lopez, at Rincon de los Toros;—surprised by Calzáda at Ortiz;—and is now driven to seek shelter among the Capuchins, (whose very name I loathe,) on the other side of the Orinoco. And you, Señor Pãez;—let us hear what exploits you performed yesterday with your boasted Llanéros. But I can easily guess, by the quiet manner of their entering the camp, that you have been beaten off by the Godos. If you had gained the least advantage, we should have heard your subordinate, pretty-behaved guard, shouting and whooping in a way that my *rotozos*, as you are pleased to call them, never dare to attempt!"

"*Oyga Tahita!* But here is Carvajàl, who swears you never give them cause to shout. He tells me that, when he belonged for a time to your guerilla, in Barcelona, you never let your men see the yellow and red stripes on Monteverde's colours; and that when Bovez and the zambo Yañez came down to El Bergantin, you fled for safety to Monagas's camp at Cantaüra."

"*Maldito sea Carvajàl!*" exclaimed the surly old chief, now thoroughly roused; "I wonder how you, Pãez, who have some sense,—a kind of rough sense of your own,—can listen to that fellow's *pendejádas*. It was I who first taught him to han-

dle a lance, at the time when Bolívar, and the rest of the disciplinarians, were skulking in Margarita and Santo Domingo; and La Patria might have been lost for ever, had it not been for Zedeño, Monagas, and another who shall be nameless. You were then but a boy, Pãez;—a mere *mocozo*, —and know nothing about it. Fly from Bovez, indeed!"

"The Tahita forgets, then,"—said Carvajàl, (who was one of Pãez's favorite officers, and commanded his guard;)—"he forgets how Monagas assisted him to revenge his own private quarrel on Yañez, when the zambo burned his house and plantation at Peñuèlas?"

"Let us hear!" cried Pãez; for he delighted to teaze, or, as he termed it, *torear* Zaraza, who never could distinguish jest from earnest: "I never heard that circumstance, Carvajàl. How was it?"

"Why, Bovez marched suddenly from the city of Cumanà to the foot of El Bergantin, where mi General Zaraza was encamped, with his usual attention to stationing out-line pickets: (that is, no farther from him than he can feel the warmth of their fires). We were, of course, surprised, and compelled to fly to Cantãura, as I said before. Monágas immediately advanced with his whole army, to repel this inroad into the Altos Llanos, but was not in time to save the Tahita's house and family. When we approached Peñuelas, Monágas and some others, among whom was the Tahita, approached to reconnoitre the enemy, who were on the brow of a hill opposite, separated from us by a deep ravina. They soon observed us,

and could distinguish the Tahita's banner; on which one of them shouted to him,—'Opa! viejo Zaraza! we have burned your house, and have the she-wolf and the cubs prisoners.' Tahita Cordilléra, instead of flying into a passion, as he does every day with his rotozos for some trifle, turned very composedly to Monagas, and observed, that truth was to be found even in a Godo sometimes, for he had heard that news the night before."

"*Oyga!*" answered Zaraza; "And pray what would you have said, *Senor Sabemucho!* had you been in my place? Could all your vapouring about revenge have built a new farm-house? But a truce to this nonsense, and let us hear what success you have had at Merricúri, and when we may expect Morillo out in the open savanna; for I suppose, by your having removed from the banks of the river, that you design to wait for him here."

"Truly, amigo Zaraza!" said Pãez, "I see nothing better to be done at present; for Morillo persists, as usual, in keeping his cavalry safe under the protection of his infantry, and you are aware how strict Bolívar's orders are against hazarding a pitched battle. Indeed, my inferiority in numbers, and total want of infantry and artillery, would be sufficient to prevent me from running that risk. But Morillo must eventually advance into the savanna, or he will have come down to the Llanos to very little purpose; and we cannot fail of having some opportunity of measuring lances with those haughty Godos. Meanwhile, I mean to detach Rangèl, with his carbineers, across the

Arāuco, to keep between the royalists and their depot, which must be in the ruins of San Fernando. If Rangèl be as active as usual, he will effectually prevent Morillo from receiving supplies from the rear, unless a battalion of infantry were to convoy every drove of mules; and I promise, for my part, that the Spaniards shall get but little rest on this side, until I have exacted full and satisfactory payment for all the mischief they have already done, and threaten to do, among the hatos. But you forget, Tahita Zaraza, that we have been in the saddle all day, and feel well disposed to give you our opinion on your skill in cookery."

The well-filled wooden spits, which stood upright round the fires, were accordingly brought forward, one by one, and planted in the ground in front of the two generals, who sat on a heap of saddles, surrounded by their aides-de-camp and attendants. Each held a knife or a lance-blade in his hand, in readiness for an attack on the roast meat; and a speedy diminution ensued in the ample provision that had been made, of entire sides of ribs, *zezínas*, and other Llanéro delicacies, which were placed before them in rapid succession. Pāez then retired to rest, having previously sent notice to all commandants of corps, that fresh horses would be distributed the next day to all who were in want of a remount.

Early the following morning, Pāez was informed that a *madrína*, consisting of several thousand horses, had been driven to the neighbourhood of the camp; and that the soldiers who wished to change horses were in readiness. He set out for

the spot, attended by every one who was not on guard, or otherwise employed,—that is to say, by about three-fourths of the army;—led by curiosity to witness the amusement always anticipated at a distribution of *potrillos*. Having inspected the horses of all such as were candidates for a remount, he gave orders for them to be turned loose, and for their owners to accompany him to the herd, which was waiting about a mile off, surrounded by experienced Llanéros, whose duty it was to collect horses for the army. It required their utmost exertions to keep the wild animals from breaking out of the circle of horsemen that was formed round them; for they had already taken alarm at sight of the army, and the oldest horses of the herd, with manes erect, and snorting loudly with anger and apprehension, continued to gallop about, followed by the rest, in search of some unguarded part, by which they might escape to their unfrequented pastures; but, wherever they presented themselves, they were met by shouts and waving of bannerols.

Pãez and his favorite officers, whom alone he permitted to interfere, rode slowly round the herd, selecting the finest young horses. They delivered each, as they lazo'd it, to some one of the cavalry who stood in readiness to receive it, and was assisted by some of his mounted companions to lead it away, for the purpose of breaking it in. It was in vain that the wild horses, who appear to have an instinctive dread of the laso, assembled close together, and held their heads low, that they might thereby escape the noose. It

was thrown so unerringly by the Llanéros, that it never failed to entangle the animal at which it was aimed, even if running at full speed. When a sufficient number had been caught for breaking in, Pãez, and as many as chose, commenced catching and throwing down colts, to cut off the hair from their manes and tails, for the purpose of twisting it into halters.

Meanwhile, the camp resounded with the uproar constantly attending the *corcoves*, or breaking-in. Horses were seen in every direction, plunging, kicking, and endeavouring by every means in their power to rid themselves of their novel incumbrances. When they succeeded in their attempt, a chase commenced across the level plain, far more animated than any European fox-hunt; the friends of the unlucky horseman pursuing the fugitive, *rienda suelta*, to turn him if possible; and to prevent his escape with saddle and halter. The herd, being at length watched more negligently than at first, made a simultaneous charge at a part of the circle which was most weakly guarded. Having succeeded in breaking through, they galloped across the savanna; plunged into a branch of a lagoon which lay in their way; and swam across to their free native pastures.

The whole of the Spanish army had now crossed the Arãuco; and Morillo, not having as yet been able to make a single prisoner, was still ignorant of Bolívar's having retreated to the other side of the Orinoco. He therefore prepared to march in search of him; but, being well aware of his own inferiority in cavalry, he determined to march

along the edge of the woods that border the rivers, and to avoid, if possible, exposing himself by entering on the open plain. Following the windings of the Arāuco, he burned every farm-house which stood near his line of march; and at length reached the hato of Caña Fístola, situated on a bend of the river, in front of the savanna where Pāez's army was encamped. It was absolutely necessary for him to cross this part of the plains, for the purpose of avoiding an extensive morass, which bordered the river for several miles below Caña Fístola; he therefore prepared to force his passage. Pāez, on seeing his intention, formed his army into three divisions. One of these he directed to hover on each flank of the advancing columns; while, with the third, he slowly retreated across the plain, causing his men to dismount occasionally, and give their horses leisure to graze.

At sun-set, the Spaniards halted, where a few scattered palm trees supplied them with fuel; and prepared their watch-fires for the night, in front of their bivouac. Pāez also halted, and kindled a line of fires; but by no means with the intention of remaining quiet until the next day. Towards midnight, he sent orders to the different corps to saddle and mount in silence; leaving, at the same time, a strong picket, with directions to patrole in front of the fires, keeping them burning, and letting themselves be heard occasionally by the enemy, who was not more than a mile distant. Pāez then led his guard, followed by the rest of the army, round the Spaniards' bivouac, keeping at a sufficient distance to elude the observation of their

pickets, which were posted close to the main body, on account of the dangerous nature of the ground. He advanced rapidly on their rear; and, on being challenged, rushed with his whole force on the guard, overpowered it, and broke in on the main body, which, fatigued by the heavy marching through the long grass of the savanna, was sleeping soundly, and was for some minutes incapable of making any resistance. As the infantry had fortunately laid down to rest in close column, by Morillo's orders, the battalion next to that which was thus unexpectedly attacked, was hastily formed into a solid square; and thus, by preventing any farther advance of the Llanéros, it gave time for the rest to rally and commence firing. Páez then retreated, having killed and wounded a considerable number in this irregular attack: but he left behind him several of his own men killed outright, and two so severely wounded, as to be unable to effect their escape.

Morillo, who was roused at the first alarm, was thrown into transports of rage at this *ozadía*, as he termed it, of the insurgents. Having been informed that two of them had fallen alive into his power, he gave orders for them to be immediately brought before him, and sent to request the attendance of Generals Calzáda and Morález. He also directed the chaplain of the army to be in readiness at his tent. Young La Torre, and his friend Castro, were on guard at the commander-in-chief's tent that morning; and both of them, but especially the latter, waited with anxiety to see the prisoners brought before their inexorable judge,

who had rarely been known to spare the life of an insurgent, when in his power, and who was now irritated beyond his usual ill-temper, by the attack which had been that morning made on the king's troops. He was besides scarcely recovered from a severe wound in the thigh, which he had received at La Puerta from one of Zaraza's lancers, who dashed unexpectedly into the centre of the staff surrounding him, and fell a sacrifice to his enthusiastic desire of destroying one of his country's bitterest enemies.

Calzáda and Morález having arrived, seated themselves on each side of Morillo, in front of his tent; and a secretary being in readiness to take notes of the prisoners' examination, one of them was introduced by Morillo's orders. He was one of Zaraza's soldiers, who had lately arrived in the plains; and from extreme faintness caused by several wounds, which no one attempted to bandage, was unable to support himself, and was with difficulty held up between two of the guard who had him in charge. He could scarcely articulate an answer to the questions which Morillo put to him; and either had not learned, or feigned to be ignorant of, Bolivar's present situation. The torches, which were held close to him, showed that the pallid hue of approaching death was on his lips, and that he was rapidly becoming insensible. Morillo, therefore, briefly ordered the guard,—"*Den le cuatro balázos!*"—telling the chaplain, who ventured to request permission to confess the wretched man, that it was needless to trouble himself, for the Chocúto could not speak sufficiently

for that purpose. "Besides," added he, "who ever heard a word of truth from a Criollo, either in full health, or at the point of death?"

The prisoner was then carried, rather than led, to a short distance behind the tent: a volley of musketry was heard, and the soldiers returned without him.

The other insurgent was then led forward. Though severely hurt, he was not so much so as to prevent his standing with some little assistance, and answering the questions that were asked him. He was a tall fine-looking young man; and, though pale from loss of blood, he confronted his merciless examiner with a dauntless determination, that greatly increased Morillo's ill-humour, aggravating the harshness of his voice and terror of his frown. The Spanish soldiers, who had the prisoner in custody, produced one of the well-known lance banners belonging to Päez's guard; stating that they had found it close to where he had fallen entangled with his horse, which had been killed; and that he did not attempt to deny belonging to that corps, which boasted of never giving nor receiving quarter.

"*Pues, cuerpo de Dios!*" cried Morillo; "I shall take good care to make him, and every comrade of his who falls into my hands, examples to such as dare to rebel against his catholic majesty. Hola, Señor Patriota! I rejoice in the opportunity of thanking one of Päez's guard, in person, for the early visit his chief paid us this morning. Dost thou hear me, Chocúto? Thy life depends on answering the questions I shall put to thee,

with as little deviation from truth, as a Llanéro's nature may permit. Where is the traitor Simòn Bolívar; and whither has he led his rebellious gang?"

"The Libertador, proud Godo! has confided the protection of their native savannas to the Llanéros. He is far from hence; or he would have long since humbled thy pride, as he did with such ease at Arăuri."

"Art thou mad, Chocúto, that thou darest answer me thus? Dost thou brave me?"

"The fate of him who falls into thy hands is sealed at once. I can have nothing to hope from a Godo's mercy; I can therefore fear nothing from his threats."

"How many men has the Caudillo Păez with him? Answer without hesitation; or instant death awaits thee!"

"Though I were less certain, than I am, that nothing can save my life, not one inquiry would I answer, that could in any way be of service to the Godos."

"*Basta!*—Señor Capellan, I will allow you five minutes to prepare this contumacious rebel for death. As soon as he has confessed himself, let the provost do his duty. Capitan La Torre! I charge you with seeing this sentence punctually executed."

Morillo then mounted and rode off, followed by his brother generals and a numerous staff, to inspect the regiment which had been principally engaged during the night, and to examine more particularly into the conduct of the rear guard.

La Torre, meanwhile, in pursuance of the order he had received, stationed sentries round an open spot of ground in the rear of the tents, and gave the chaplain every facility for executing undisturbed his melancholy office of confessing the unfortunate prisoner. The Llanéro's arms were tied behind him with a long hair halter, one end of which was held by a sergeant, who stood at a sufficient distance for his conference with the chaplain to be unheard, as he knelt at his side.

Castro entreated his friend's permission for him to speak a few words to the prisoner, whom he had but indistinctly seen by the varying light of the torches; and obtained it, merely for a moment, when the five minutes allowed for confession should have expired. La Torre therefore directed him to warn the chaplain, when it was time to surrender his penitent to the provost's guard. Having delivered his message, Castro turned to offer a few words of commiseration to the unhappy Llanéro, and to enquire his name; but what were his sensations when, on closely examining his features by the first faint beams of the day, he recognised his cousin Felipe Gomez! The prisoner heard his exclamation of surprise and grief, and knew him immediately. "This is as it should be!" said he: "the crime of bearing arms in the service of the tyrant, against your native country, deserved no less a punishment than that of witnessing the death of your kinsmen, as well as that of your countrymen."

"*Virgen del cielo!* can this indeed be you, dear Felipe? I will fly to Morillo;—he must relent

when he learns how deep an interest I have in you."

"Dream not of it, Andres! It is not in the tyrant's nature to shew mercy. Were it otherwise, be assured that I should despise a life which a traitor to his country,—as thou art,—had power to bestow."

Castro rushed to the guard tent, and sprang on a horse which stood saddled near.

"La Torre!" he cried; "I implore you, by all that is dearest to you, to delay until I have seen and spoken with Morillo. It is my cousin Felipe!"

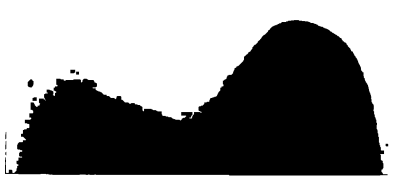
"Are you mad, Castro?" asked La Torre: "Will you leave your guard, and venture to address Morillo on behalf of a prisoner? I sincerely pity you, and am heartily sorry he happens to be a relation; but you know, as well as I do, that were it his own mother's son, Morillo would spare no insurgent; and least of all one of Păez's guard."

Castro, however, listened not to his friend's expostulation; but galloped furiously in search of the commander-in-chief, whom he found in the worst of all possible moods for attending to the request he had to make. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate for a moment to implore him to pardon his kinsman; but he might have spared himself the mortification of receiving an unqualified refusal; for Morillo appeared to resent the attempt to excite his compassion, as if it had been in some sort aiding and abetting rebellion.

"Your kinsman and near relation, Sir?" said he: "So much the worse for you. I make no doubt you have many kinsmen and relations, in this re-

bellious part of the country, in arms against their lawful sovereign. But be assured, Sir, that were it your father, or my own, nothing should induce me to spare his life another hour. Let some one ride instantly to my tent, and acquaint Captain La Torre, that I shall hold him answerable for this unwarrantable delay in causing my orders to be executed. Tell him it will be at his own proper peril, if I find the prisoner alive at my return. Not a word, Teniente Castro! I must say that this forwardness to interfere in behalf of a traitor, —though he be your kinsman,—has given me but an unfavourable opinion of your political principles. And let me ask, Sir, are you not on guard? How is it that you have dared to be guilty of so scandalous a breach of discipline, as to leave your guard, before regularly relieved, or otherwise at liberty? Begone to your post, Sir! and beware lest you have occasion, ere long, to plead in your own behalf."

Castro retired, with a deep sense of humiliation, from the presence of the despot. Before he could reach the guard, a discharge of fire-arms, followed by the sound of one solitary musket, (as the *coup de grace)* announced the death of his cousin.



CHAPTER IX.

THE TRAVELLING MERCHANT.—THE LLANEROS' FEAST.

Autolycus.—"Will you buy my tape, or lace for your cape,
"My dainty duck, my dear-a?
"Any silk, any thread, any toys for your head,
"Of the new'st and fin'st, fin'st wear-a?
"Come to the pedlar; money's a medler,
"That doth utter all men's ware-a."
Winter's Tale.

PREVIOUSLY to commencing the last attack on the royalist forces, Pãez had issued orders to the different corps, composing his army, to separate, when the skirmish should be concluded, for the purpose of misleading Morillo; and had directed them to rendezvous in a savanna which he named, close to the temporary habitations of the emigrants. Each regiment, accordingly, crossed the plain in a different direction, and continued to march in it, as long as they could be distinguished from the Spanish camp. They then turned their horses' heads towards the lagoon of Cunavíchi; and, in their way, they

collected and drove with them several herds of cattle, for the use of the Llanéro families. The arrival of the army was a signal for rejoicing among them; with the exception of those who had lost relations or intimate friends in the late conflict at Caña Fistola.

Páez was informed that one of the trading boats, which used to bring periodical supplies of goods for sale to San Fernando, Apurito, and other towns in the low country of Varínas, had arrived at the mouth of the Arauco, but was prevented from proceeding farther, by the news of Morillo's inroad. He therefore sent a party of lancers to escort the merchant to Cunavichi, with as much of his goods as he could conveniently transport on mules. His arrival was impatiently expected, as well in the camp, as among the emigrants' huts; for these *comerciantes*, as they always styled themselves, (although the Llanéros persisted, most irreverently, in calling them *mercachifles*), never failed to bring tobacco and aguardiente for the men, as well as handkerchiefs, millinery, and ornaments of all descriptions, for the females.

The escort returned with the Sieur Bonjean, a French trader on the Orinoco, between Guayana and Varínas, who was well known about this time in every part of the Llanos; and was one of Páez's most particular friends, accommodating him frequently with articles for the use of his guard, either on credit, or in exchange for broken silver of different sorts, the produce of occasional skirmishes with the Spaniards. He was also the only travelling merchant who would receive the depreciated pezetas

coined in Achaguas. This he did to a considerable amount; and by that means monopolised for some time the sale of articles suited to the Llanéro market, as well as the purchase of his return cargoes, consisting of hides and tallow.

This original, happening to be at Cumanà when the revolution first commenced, sold all his goods, and joined the patriot army in a fit of enthusiasm. He speedily attained the rank of Captain; but was once unluckily detected by Bolívar in the fact of secreting some plunder, and narrowly escaped being shot; for the Libertador was then inflexibly severe in punishing any misconduct of that nature. Bolívar, however, in consideration of his services and devotion to the cause of independence, contented himself with kicking him, (in the most literal acceptation of the word, as Bonjean himself declared,) out of the corps to which he belonged, and forbidding him, on pain of death, from appearing anywhere within twenty leagues of the army again. This anecdote the little Frenchman used to relate with perfect *nonchalence;* protesting that the honour Bolívar had thereby done him, had spared him the mortification of taking an abrupt leave of his dear companions in arms; for he could no longer endure the bad cookery, and total want of *bienséance*, which was so flagrant in the patriot camp.

On his receiving his discharge, *(á puntapiès,)* he retired to the city of Angostura on the Orinoco, with a sufficient sum of money in hand to recommence trade; for Bolívar, it appears, was contented with the summary chastisement he had inflicted on

him, and did not insist on restitution being made of that secret appropriation which used to be termed in the patriot army—"*la llápa.*" Bonjean then purchased a *lancha*, or large trading-boat adapted to the navigation of the river; and having taken a countryman of his, Pierre Robinet, into partnership, they freighted it between them, with such merchandise as was most in request at the small villages and missionary settlements on the banks.

Fortunately for the adventurers, they had been warned, previously to their leaving Angostura, that the river was infested in some parts by robbers; and they had taken the very necessary precaution of providing themselves with four muskets, and some few ball-cartridges. The boat was actually attacked, near the pass of Vernavel, by a piragua full of river pirates; but the partners, both of whom had formerly served in Napoleon's armies, gave their assailants, who possessed no weapons except bows and slings, such a warm reception, (with the assistance of the old Patron, who loaded the muskets as fast as they were fired,) that they succeeded in beating them off. The news of this attack, and of the spirited defence offered by the French merchants, soon spread among the villages frequented by Mess. Bonjean and Robinet; and they were thenceforward permitted to continue their traffic unmolested, which they did for several years with tolerable success.

A large shed had been prepared for the reception of the goods; and the mules were unloaded there, surrounded by a crowd of highly delighted spectators, who had assembled to welcome their old

acquaintance, with whom the greater part of the Llanéros were on intimate terms. Four, out of the six mules which arrived, were loaded with skins of aguardiente and bales of tobacco ; and Pãez immediately bespoke two entire loads, for the purpose of distributing among his guard, whom he determined to feast that evening. The remainder was purchased by Zaráza, Ramirez, &c., for the use of their respective followers.

The petácas, containing the stuffs and ornaments, now remained to be disposed of; and the sale was to the full as interesting to the women, as the preceding one had been to their husbands and brothers. Mons. Bonjean, with the usual politeness of his nation, presented himself in the first place before Doña Rosaura, with patterns of his best goods; and the other emigrant matrons, although eager to behold the display of novelties which he always brought them, waited patiently until " La Señora" had made her selection, before they commenced their purchases. Their manner of choosing the articles which they fancied, would have alarmed a stranger to the Llanéras' customs, for the safety of his goods; but Bonjean, who was well acquainted with their honourable mode of dealing, left everything completely *á discreciòn.* Their eagerness to purchase appeared more like the pillaging of an army, after a successful assault, than mere shopping with an honest intention. In a few minutes, every article exposed to sale had vanished in different directions, and was conveyed to the ranchos, where the goods were deposited in safety; while the purchasers returned to inform Mons.

Bonjean what each of them had taken, and to pay him the value.

The Frenchman, having in this way speedily disposed of all his merchandise, was at leisure to visit Pãez. He found him in company with Zaraza, Carvajàl, and other favorite Llanéro officers, feasting in a separate part of the wood, surrounded by the whole of his guard, who had formed a semicircle in front of the tree under which their chieftain sat. Bonjean, who was accompanied by the patron of his boat, a weather-beaten old creole, was complimented with a seat near the two generals; and the calabashes were handed round, with the usual ceremony of a *brindis* from each, as he raised the cup to his lips. The spirits of the Llanéros were soon elevated to the singing pitch; and the favorite national song, which, though written by a Dominican friar of Buenos Ayres, has been universally adopted throughout South America, was sung with wild enthusiasm.

[8] "Oid Imortales el grito sagrádo,—
'Libertàd! Libertàd! Libertàd!
"Oid el ruido de rotas cadénas,
"Y ensalzada la noble igualdàd!
"Se levanta, á la faz de la tiérra,
"Una nueva y gloriosa Naciòn,
"Coronada su sien de lauréles,
"Y á sus plantas rendido un Leòn.
"Sean eternos los lauréles que supímos conseguir!
"Coronados de gloria vivamos! O jurémos con gloria morir!"

It would be difficult to form an idea of the effect produced by these verses, the tune adapted to

which is singularly beautiful, being sung in chorus by above five hundred Llanéros, all of whom were fond of music, and had tolerably good voices. Silence ensued for a few moments; but was soon broken by repeated shouts of "Viva la Patria!"—"Viva Pāez!" to which several added, half in jest,—"Viva el Tahita Cordilléra!"—This was followed by a rapid circulation of the calabash; after which Paez called on his guard for the "Song of the Savannas."

"Si acaso te preguntan porque andais descamisado;—
"(Avanzàd! Avanzàd! Avanzàd! con machéte en mano!)
"Decid, que con sus tributos los Godos me la han quitado.
"(Avanzàd! Avanzàd! Avanzàd! con machéte en mano!)
"Vengan, Chapetónes! a morir aqui;
"Dexemos la Espana en su frenesi.

"La justicia en las Audiencias se compraba ý se vendía;—
"(Avanzàd! Avanzàd! Avanzàd con machéte en mano!)
"Y el oro de los pleytantes en los Cortes prevalía.
"(Avanzàd! Avanzàd! Avanzàd con machete en mano!)
"Vengan, Chapetónes! á morir aqui;
"Dexemos la Espana en su frenesi.

"Todos los reyes del mundo son igualmente tyranos;—
"(Avanzàd! Avanzàd! Avanzàd con machéte en mano!)
"Y contra ellos es preciso que nosotros nos unamos.
"(Avanzàd! Avanzàd! Avanzàd, con machete in mano;)
"Vengan, Chapetones! a morir aqui,
"Dexemos la Espana en su frenesi." 9

Pāez now retired, followed by Bonjean, Zaraza, and some of his principal officers; and left his guard to the uncontrouled enjoyment of their banquet. He led the way to Doña Rosaura's rancho, where he found her surrounded, as usual, by

a large party of emigrants, who were amusing themselves under the Congria trees, with equal glee, though without the riotous merriment of the Llanêros. They were passing round the *máte;* for the French trader had not forgotten to bring with him an abundant supply of the herb of Paraguay, which is preferred by the South American females far above tea, or even chocolate.

Bonjean was immediately called on for the news from Guayana, as usual on his arrival in the Llanos; and gave them the following account.

CHAPTER X.

NEWS FROM ANGOSTURA.

Curtis. " I prythee, good Grumio, tell me the news."
Grumio. " Why Jack boy! ho boy! and as much news as thou wilt."

Taming of the Shrew.

" You are such complete *hermitanos* in these savannas, that I question if even Doña Rosaura has yet heard of the serious misunderstanding between Bolívar and the mulatto General Arizmendi, who, you all know, has been many years Governor of Margarita. Urdanéta was sent by the Libertadòr to that island, with orders to collect recruits for the army, which was about to sail up the Orinoco; and on landing at Pampatàr, it seems, he proceeded immediately to execute his orders, without previously communicating them to Arizmendi, although the province was under his command. The old chief took umbrage at this. Having collected his escort, he marched against Urdanéta, and rescued all the recruits, who were on the point of being embarked

for the main land, much against their will. It is reported,—and nothing is more probable,—that he threatened to shoot Urdanéta, and was with some difficulty prevented from putting his threat in execution, by the opportune arrival at Pampatar of Admiral Luis Brión, the Curazao-man, who succeeded in pacifying him. He nevertheless put his brother general in irons, and confined him in the *calabozo* for some days; after which he permitted him to depart in a piragua.

"On Urdanéta's arrival at Angostura, he reported the treatment he had met with to Bolívar, who vowed to revenge the insult thus offered to his most confidential general. *El Tio Porsupuesto*[10] was obliged, however, to dissemble his anger for a time, until he should have Arizmendi in his power; for he was well aware that, if he were to threaten him openly, it would be utterly impossible to get him off the island of Margarita. Arizmendi is so much beloved there,—certainly not for the suavity of his manners,—that the inhabitants would have risen *en masse*, men, women, and children, as they did when they turned out the Spanish garrison, rather than suffer a hair of his head to be injured. Bolívar therefore sent him one of his usual polite invitations to a conference, which the old general accepted, contrary to the advice of all his friends. They in vain represented to him the risk he was about to run; and warned him of the fate of poor general Piar, who had been shot, not long before, in front of the palace at Angostura, whither he had been decoyed by a similar invitation. Arizmendi answered all their remonstrances, by assuring them,

that Bolívar was too politic to alienate the minds of all the inhabitants of so important an island, as Margarita was to Venezuela. He took his youngest son with him to Guayana, leaving the elder in command of his escort, and causing him to swear, by our Lady of Chiquinquirà,[11] that he would revenge his father's death, to the utmost, on Bolívar, should he be dealt with treacherously.

" When Arizmendi reached Angostura, he found, as his friends had anticipated, that Bolívar had left the city, having given directions to Zea, the vice-president of the republic, to have him tried for his conduct towards Urdanéta. He was not to be brought before a court-martial, as no officers, of sufficient rank to form it, could be found obsequious enough to expose themselves to the odium incurred by those who sentenced the unfortunate Piar; but the congress of Venezuela, which was then assembled in that city, was directed to take cognizance of the offence alleged to have been committed. Bolívar well knew, that the members of this body would be easily induced to further his views in sacrificing Arizmendi; for they were all timid civilians, who above all things dreaded a counter-revolution; beeing too deeply implicated in the former, to hope for mercy if they should fall into the royalists' hands, and consequently zealous in supporting Bolívar's authority, against any attempt at rivalry. Besides, as they were deputies from various parts of the country, no act of theirs, as a body, would be in danger of being resented on individuals; as might be the case with respect to military men, who were constantly liable to be thrown into the power

of Arizmendi's family or personal friends, by the unforeseen vicissitudes attending the service.

"Arizmendi was, in the first place, put in irons, and confined, with a sentry at the door, in a small corner house in the street leading from the plaza of Angostura to the fort; his son being permitted, at his earnest request, to share his father's imprisonment. The congress then ordered him to be brought to the bar of their assembly, which held its sessions in the large hall of the governor's palace; but the old general treated them with such undisguised contempt, and answered all their interrogatories in such a strain of recrimination, not to say abuse of his accusers, and all concerned in the trial, that they were obliged to remand him to his place of confinement. They resolved to conduct the examination by means of written questions, which were carried to the prison by a notary, who returned to the congress with answers;—when Arizmendi condescended to take his cigar from his mouth for that purpose. The trial consequently proceeded in a very dilatory manner; and had been spun out for nearly six weeks, when an event occurred, such as totally to alter the relation in which the general stood to his learned judges.

"Monágas having marched towards Barcelona, for the purpose of effecting a junction with Bermúdez, the low country bordering the Orinoco was left totally unprotected; and the active royalist, Colonel Lopez, took the opportunity to pass unmolested through Concepcion del Pao, and to shew himself with a considerable force at La Soledad, exactly opposite Angostura. An English brig, which was

lying there taking in mules for Trinidad, had just time to cut her cables and drift down the river, to avoid being taken possession of. Lopez, however, took all the cattle that had been collected there for the supply of the city; and the soldiers, who were stationed at the matanzas, seized all the canoes, and crossed over to Angostura, leaving the inhabitants to shift for themselves.

"The news of this sudden incursion was brought to the Sala de Congreso, just as Don Carlos Alguenas, the deputy for Zipaquirà, was in the midst of a violent harangue against Arizmendi, calling on his colleagues to cut the trial short, and instantly to sentence the traitorous governor of Margarita, who had dared to resist the authority of the Libertador;—a hero whom the orator designated as '*El digno rival de Huazinton!*' The alarming intelligence was communicated to the house by the vice-president, without a comment. It needed none, nor had the deputies, apparently, leisure to listen to any; for a simultaneous rush to the lobby took place, to enquire into the truth of the report, or rather to ascertain whether the enemy were actually crossing the river. It was in vain that Zea called on them to rally round their vice-president, and deliberate on measures for saving the place. It appeared the unanimous opinion of the worthy members, that horses and baggage mules ought to be instantly furnished by the state, for the purpose of an adjournment to Guayana la Vieja.

"The foreign merchants of Angostura, who owned by far the greater part of the property which was at stake, increased the confusion, by demanding

that Zea should call out militia, and endeavour to hold the place, until succour should arrive either up or down the river. Zea positively declined the honour of commanding, in any shape, as military governor. He urged in excuse that, although he might have some pretensions to talent as a diplomatist, his inclination had never led him to embrace the profession of arms; and truly, every one that observed the diminutive figure of the vice-president, on that memorable occasion, appearing to shrink into nothing under the emergency of the peril, (for a price had been set on his head, among those of other prominent leaders in the revolution, by the royalists,) could not but agree, that he would set but an indifferent example as a commander.

"At length one of the merchants suggested that, unless the Honourable Congress had irrevocably decided on shooting Arizmendi, it would be as well to confer on him the dangerous office of defending the city; and that, at all events, it was necessary to come to some immediate determination; for if the rotozos of the suburbs should perceive that the Government was irresolute, they would immediately commence plunder, and in all probability take canoes across to the enemy, if no force was raised to overawe them. This suggestion was unanimously approved of; and an order was sent to the sergeant of the guard, which had Arizmendi in charge, directing him to take off the general's irons, and set him at liberty. The notary, who had been previously employed in the trial, was likewise commissioned to inform him, that his presence was requested

by the congress, that they might have the benefit of his experience in this momentous crisis.

" Arizmendi received this polite intimation, with anything but the demonstrations of gratitude which his former judges expected from him. He even threatened to do a mischief to the sergeant, if he attempted to touch his irons; and sent a message to Zea, in his usual style, (in which he is far from being choice in his expressions), intimating that, as he had been put in irons by order of the congress, there he would remain, although Lopez should burn the city, unless the deputies, with the vice-president at their head, would consent to come in person to his prison to release him.

" This was indeed a bitter pill to most of them; but there was unluckily no alternative. They were therefore obliged to submit, though with rather a bad grace, to wait on Arizmendi; countenanced, at their request, by several of the foreign merchants, to whom he was very partial, and on whom they depended for support under these humiliating circumstances. I had the curiosity to witness the scene, and was highly amused by it. The old general listened to Zea's harangue, and submitted to have his irons struck off, without uttering a word, or even interrupting his smoking, until he had finished his cigar He then rose, with a stern smile of triumph on his dark weather-beaten features; and having received and attentively examined his sabre, which was now returned to him for the first time since he had been put under arrest, he deigned his visitors no answer, but " *Vamos, pues! hijos de la grandísima!*"

" He immediately called for horses for himself and his son, whom he appointed his only aide-de-camp. In answer to Zea's offer of the palace for his residence, he coolly replied, that the room which congress had selected for him on his first arrival was quite good enough for him. At his desire, a bed and table were sent to his former prison; and writing materials for his son, who was the only secretary he chose to appoint. Before he rode off to examine into the state of defence of the city and environs, he ordered proclamation to be made in the Plaza, and through the principal streets, calling on every male capable of bearing arms, to appear within two hours, in front of the palace, with or without weapons, but provided with either a cloak or a blanket;—and this invitation was enforced by the emphatic warning,—' *so péna de la vida !*'

" There was a pretty general muster, as might have been anticipated, on Arizmendi's return. With the assistance of his son, he ranged all those who had presented themselves in ranks, two deep, round the Plaza. Having picked out the principal merchants and tradesmen, he told off the remainder by fifties, and gave each of these companies in charge, for the night, to some merchant, whom he ordered immediately to draw out two lists of them, one of which was for himself. Arms were brought out for them from different merchants' stores, and distributed to such as had none of their own, as also ammunition; and, in the course of two hours, guards were posted for the night, in every situation where there was reason to apprehend danger, the

remainder being ordered to bivouac in the Alaméda, by the river side. It was ludicrous to hear the various appeals, which were made to Arizmendi, by several who found themselves thus unceremoniously drawn in to bear arms for La Patria. He peremptorily refused to release any one that night, on any plea whatever, except the deputies, whom he ordered to assemble at the palace; consoling the rest with a promise, that in the morning he should be at leisure to remedy any mistakes which might have arisen, in consequence of his ignorance of their ranks in society.

"He then attended the congress, where, to their great relief, he made not the slightest allusion to what had occurred, with respect to his imprisonment and trial. He desired the members to be under no apprehension for the safety of the city; but recommended to their attention the supply of provisions to the different guards. He also submitted to them the necessity of subscribing liberally, to provide proper clothing and equipment for such troops as he should select the next day for the formation of a *Guardia Civica;* reminding them, that they were the more particularly called on to contribute, as they were themselves exempt from all personal services.

"The following morning, Arizmendi had a working party of two hundred men employed, at daybreak, raising a breast-work in front of the Aduana, and mounting on it some brass guns, which had lain for years neglected and forgotten in the town ditch, hid by the wild cucumber and prickly-pear. He then paraded the whole of the new garrison;

and picked out for service, as privates, those who had no ostensible means of supporting themselves. He appointed sergeants and corporals to these, from among a few veteran soldiers who were in the city; and selected officers from those petty tradesmen whose business was of no very important nature; assigning to each individual the pay and rations of regular troops. He advised the foreign merchants, and all those who were not included in this enlistment, to form themselves into a corps, for the purpose of furnishing patroles, and protecting their own property. This suggestion was adopted; and, by the hour of siesta, the city was in perfect tranquillity.

"Still Arizmendi, who had all the prejudices of an islander, was not satisfied, without having some armed boats on the river, with which he might annoy the enemy, who was still encamped at La Soledad, feasting on our bullocks; the patriot gunboats having either gone up the river with the army, or lying in the inlet called the Serpent's-Mouth, at the entrance of the Orinoco. He accordingly cast his eyes on some large piraguas, which were hauled up into the lagoon near the Alaméda; and sending for the chief carpenter of the arsenal, directed him to raise on four of them, so as to enable them to carry light six-pounders; enquiring at the same time, when the first would be launched. The mãestro, an European, who had been used to the dilatory method of working, in use under the Spanish Government, named a day, but failed in getting the boat ready as he had promised. Arizmendi told him that, as this was his first offence, it should be

pardoned; but that in Margarita he usually punished such breaches of contract with four bullets. He desired him once more to name a day; and the măestro having assured him that the boat should be in the water by the Saturday following, Arizmendi left him, merely saying, in a significant tone, —'Cuidado!'

"Saturday came; and Arizmendi was punctual to the appointed hour at the river side; but the boat was not yet completed. 'Did I not say, *cuidado?*' exclaimed Arizmendi; '*Vengan cuatro de la guardia!*'—and, in spite of every entreaty, he shot the master-carpenter on the spot. He then promoted the foreman, who stood trembling by, to the vacant situation; and ordered him to name a day for the completion of the work; adding, (what was probably in this instance a superfluous warning,) the formidable word—'*Cuidado!*'

"Lopez, the Spanish commander, finding he had an experienced general to deal with, instead of a congress composed of civilians, retraced his steps, and escaped before Monágas came up with him. Bolívar was so highly pleased with the manner in which Arizmendi undertook the defence of Angostura, that he granted him full pardon for what had taken place; reinstated him in his Government of Margarita; and appointed young Arizmendi one of his own aides de-camp."

"And pray," asked Păez;" "have you lately met your old friend and General Don Simòn? For, if I mistake not, you parted in Cumanà on rather bad terms formerly."

"You shall hear;" said Bonjean: "I am so far

reconciled to him, that I was employed by him as interpreter lately, at an entertainment which he gave in Angostura, on the occasion of the arrival of an Envoy from North America. Bolívar, who, you well know, is the most temperate of the patriot generals, was nearly intoxicated with joy at the unusual circumstance of receiving an Envoy; and a very few *brindises*, after dinner, completed the business. I listened with delight to several extravagant propositions that he made; until at length his spirits became so much elevated, that he mounted the table, with those high boots he so constantly wears. He walked, with all the dignity he could assume, to the bottom of the table, where Santiago Mariño sat; and exclaimed; 'This is the way in which I design to march from Panama to Cape Horn!' He then returned to his seat, fortunately without having done any mischief on the table; and added, 'Thus I propose to march back again; injuring no one that does not oppose my progress.'"

"The old pilot belonging to Bonjean's boat had followed him, when he left the noisy feast of the Guardia de Honor; and Pãez observed him, as he sat silently smoking his churumbéla in a corner.

"*Vamos, Senor Piloto!*" said the Chief; "the Orinoco boat-men are all famous for their talent of story-telling; and we certainly cannot excuse you from taking your turn."

"*Vaya pues, mi General!* far be it from me to gainsay Bolívar in the Cordilléra, or Pãez in his Llanos."

CHAPTER XI.

THE ORINOCO FISHERMAN'S TALE.

"Would'st thou be happy, would'st thou be free,
"Come to our woody islands with me!
"The Caÿman shall not lurk within
"To steal around thy bed;
"But the leopard shall yield his spotted skin
"That thy couch may be warmly spread.
"Fear not the rocks that darken our course,
"Our canoes are swift and strong:
"Fear not the eddy's hurrying force,
"We shall dart, like light, along."

Louisa Stuart Costello.

"Some twenty years ago, before I commenced piloting vessels on the Orinoco and its branches, (for the river was then very little navigated, especially by strangers,) I had the largest fishing piragua between Las Piedras and Cāycára; and frequently carried cargoes of *bagres* and *rovalos* down to Angostura, and even as far as Guayana la Vieja. One season, the rains had lasted so long in the hilly country, and the river continued so deeply flooded, that not a single fish of any kind

was to be caught in the usual places. Six of us, therefore, all Cāycára fishermen, agreed to take the piragua up the Orinoco as far as the cataracts, where we knew, from the experience of former years, that we should be successful. We took with us a fortnight's provision of *tazájo* and aguardiente, as well as such arms as we were allowed to carry for our defence, (which were at that time only lances and machetes,) against the Carríbi Indians, who infested the creeks in the neighbourhood of the falls, and used to be very troublesome to all white men, for they were particularly jealous of their fishing ground. We saw, however, very few of them that season; and were so successful in our fishing, that, in less than a week, we had salted and smoked bagres enough to load the piragua; we therefore prepared to return to Cāycára.

"The evening previous to our leaving Los Saltos, we were lying at anchor in the mouth of a broad creek, just below the cataracts. We lay at a little distance from the shore, as well for the purpose of avoiding mosquitos, as to be out of the reach of panthers, which are very numerous in that part of the country; when we saw a large canoe approaching us along the creek. Our proverb says, 'Every stranger on the river is an enemy.' Consequently, as we knew of no neighbours' canoe of that size, we got up our *anclóte*, and prepared to receive the strangers, according as they should prove friendly or otherwise. As they neared us, we could easily tell, by the round blades of their paddles, that they were Indians from the Rio

Negro, who were at constant enmity with our fishermen; and we of course, naturally enough, expected an immediate attack. I had one old Spanish fuzil concealed in the boat; (the Alcalde of Cäycára knew it, but winked hard at it, as he was my compadre,) and I was just going to fire into the canoe,—for there is nothing like being before hand with the Indians if it comes to blows, —when one of the copper-skins stood up, waving a green plantain leaf, which we answered with a white shirt on the point of an oar.

"We then waited for them; and were surprised when they came alongside of our piragua, to see a white man and woman, with a negro who appeared to be their slave, seated in the stern-sheets of the canoe, under an awning of bambu thatched with leaves. The white stranger asked us in Spanish, but with rather a foreign accent, if we belonged to any of the missions on the river. We answered in the negative, informing him that we were fishermen from Cäycára, where there were no missionaries; but there was a Padre Cura and a church, and moreover an alcalde. He then enquired if we would take him and the lady, with their servant, to Cäycára; promising to reward us for our trouble. We agreed to take them all on board, with or without payment; as we were already on the point of returning home, and there was room enough in the piragua. We therefore spread some of our ponchos over the bales of dried fish; and the Indians assisted us to shift the awning from their canoe to our boat. The negro then passed in a small trunk, and a fowling-piece, together

with an antelope which had been not long shot, and several bunches of plantains; while his master, raising the lady, who appeared very weak and faint, in his arms, assisted her into the piragua, and laid her under the awning. He then gave some money to the Indian steering the canoe; which was immediately paddled away rapidly up the creek.

"The stranger, having spread a shawl over the front of the awning, came forward into the bows of the piragua. We were all seated there, wondering at the appearance of foreigners in such an unfrequented part of the country, and waiting for an opportunity of questioning the negro; for there was something so stern and forbidding about his master, that no one cared to be the first to address him, although he was a handsome man enough for a fair-haired foreigner. He asked for the patròn of the piragua; and, when I was pointed out to him, he entreated me to set off immediately for Cäycára.

"'The lady,' said he, 'is unused to travelling by water. She has lately undergone much fatigue and agitation; and it is absolutely necessary for her to reach some village, as soon as possible, where she may obtain female attendance, and the consolation of a priest.'"

"I answered, that nothing farther was necessary, but to cook provisions for the way, to avoid the necessity of landing for that purpose, on any wooded parts of the banks, where we might be surprised by Carríbi Indians, or attacked by panthers. We had intended to make that preparation early the following morning; but, as the stranger desired it

so earnestly, and for the lady's sake, we pulled the piragua to a neighbouring sandy island, on which there was plenty of dry wood for cooking, and no danger of molestation from Indians or wild-beasts. We soon kindled a large fire, and put on our olla full of tazajo, with plantains which the stranger gave us; and the black servant took the antelope on shore, to skin and roast it for his master and the lady. We now had the opportunity which we longed for, of enquiring who the strangers were, and whence they came.

"The negro informed us, that his master was a Frenchman, by name Don Luis Philibert, and they had come from Cüenca, not far from Quito. That is a place I had never heard of; although, being pilot for the Orinoco and its branches, I know as much of the world as most men. The stranger, it seems, had formerly commanded one of the armed free-traders on the Pacific ocean; and had been successfully engaged in landing goods at Tumáco, Payta, and other small ports on the coast of Choco and Peru. The Spanish authorities at Lima having obtained intelligence of the vessel, a guarda-costa was sent out from Callao in pursuit, and succeeded in capturing her off point Pacazmayo, and carrying her into Guayaquil. The Frenchmen on board offered such a desperate resistance, that most of them were killed or wounded. Among the latter was Don Luis, and that so severely, that his life was for some time despaired of; in consequence of which, and in consideration of his manners being far superior to those of the generality of free traders, the governor of Guayaquil, instead of

ordering him to be confined in the calabozo with the rest of the prisoners, received him into his own house, where he met with every possible attention, until his wounds were healed. He still continued in a very delicate state of health; and, as the sickly season was fast approaching, which is peculiarly dangerous to invalids in Guayaquil, on account of the marshes by which that city is surrounded, the governor, who had begun to take considerable interest in the recovery of his prisoner, advised him to pass the winter at Cüenca, which is in the hilly country, giving him a letter of introduction to Don Pedro Pachéco, who was chief alcalde of that city.

"'He was my master at that time;' said the negro; 'and a greater tyrant, not only to his slaves, but in his own family, was never known. His wife had died in consequence of his ill-usage, as we all well knew, leaving him one daughter, Doña Elëuteria, who is the lady in the piragua. Don Pedro, who was so polite to strangers, that no one could have suspected him of being of a haughty cruel disposition, received Don Luis with the greatest affability, and payed him every attention. He was really glad of any society; for, although he had sufficient interest with government to secure his appointment as alcalde, few of his fellow citizens would associate with him, on account of his bad domestic character. Don Luis rapidly recovered his health in the cool climate of Cüenca, and constantly walked out in the evenings with Doña Elëuteria, playing on his flageolet, in the plantain grove in front of the house. We slaves, more-

over, although we took no notice of what we saw, frequently observed them walking there by moonlight, long after her father had retired to rest.

"'One unlucky night,—whether Don Pedro had received private intelligence of these meetings, or whether he suspected them of his own accord, I never could learn,—he watched his daughter, and detected her walking as usual at a late hour with Don Luis. As I was one of the under gardeners on the plantation, I lived in a hut built among the plantains, to preserve them from being plundered by the monkeys; and heard the whole. Never had I seen my old master in such a passion. Although it was well known that he cared very little about his daughter, or indeed about any one but himself, he was enraged, beyond measure, at the thought of a stranger and a prisoner presuming to address her. It was in vain that Don Luis assured him his intentions were honourable; Pachéco abused him for a French smuggler, who deserved to have been hanged at the yard-arm of his own vessel; and ordered him to leave the estate instantly, and never to presume to appear there again. He hurried his daughter roughly into the house; swearing he would send her, before the end of the month, to the convent of the Agustínas Descalzas at Quito.

"'We saw nothing of Don Luis on the plantation for some days; until I was awoke by him, one night, as I lay sleeping in my rancho. After asking me some questions, and convincing himself by my answers that I had no great devotion for Don Pedro, he proposed to me to assist him, by

conveying a letter to my young mistress, for which he promised to pay me handsomely; telling me that he would return to my rancho for an answer the following night. I was rather puzzled at first how to deliver it; but bethought me at last of entrusting it to Doña Elëuteria's negro girl, who always came to my hut for plantains, when Don Pedro was out riding about the estate. I succeeded in getting an answer, which I delivered to Don Luis that night. He was overjoyed at receiving it, and rewarded me with a doubloon; telling me that he would return the next evening, when the family had gone to rest, and that he should depend on my services for assistance, in something more important than merely delivering a letter. I then guessed that an elopement was about to take place; and determined, not only to further it by every means in my power, but to accompany them wherever they went. I knew they would go far enough from my old master, for their own sakes; and this struck me as being precisely the opportunity I had long wished for, of escaping from his tyranny.

"'The next night, I was on the alert, expecting Don Luis. He arrived before midnight, accompanied by a peon, who was dressed in the habit of a Quitaño mountaineer, leading a saddle mule, and a baggage-*macho*. We tied the animals among the plantain trees. All three then proceeded cautiously to the house, carrying with us a ladder, which used to be kept at my hut for the purpose of gathering fruit; and raised it against Doña Elëuteria's window. She was in readiness, and beck-

oned to Don Luis, who ascended the ladder lightly; and having received from her the trunk you saw just now, he passed it to the peon, who carried it to the place where he had left the mules. Don Luis then descended with my young mistress, muffled in a capóte which he had brought for her; and they hastened to the hut, whither I followed them with the ladder, that their flight might remain undiscovered as long as possible.

"'While the peon was securing the trunk on the macho, Doña Elëuteria retired into my hut, with a small bundle my new master had brought with him; and returned in a few minutes disguised as a *mozo de mulas*. She then mounted the saddled mule; and Don Luis, embracing me for joy, was about to make me a handsome present, when I assured him, that I wished for no other reward, but permission to follow him and my young mistress. I told him, that I had long been resolved to run away from Don Pedro Pachéco; and offered my services to go through the world with him, without fee or reward, rather than stay where I was. There was no time for deliberation or argument; he therefore consented to take me, and we set off at a rapid pace for the mountains to the eastward of Cüenca.

"'We travelled all night up ravines, worn through the forest by the winter torrents, where there was scarcely footing for the mules. Early in the morning, we arrived at the summit of the first range of hills, where we unsaddled the beasts in an open spot of ground, near a small spring of water. There Don Luis proposed to pass the day,

and sent the peon to a mountain hut not far off, to procure provisions, which he had not previously thought of, in his anxiety to succeed in his undertaking. The Cerráno soon returned, with some dried venison and a fowl, which I broiled on the embers for the fugitives. They now had leisure to talk about their future plans; and agreed in opinion that, as the elopement was probably only just discovered, they ran very little risk of being overtaken. It was highly improbable that Don Pedro should discover the direction they had chosen; for there was no road over these mountains; and even the peon, who had been bribed high to accompany them, knew nothing whatever of the country on the other side; except, by common report, that the source of the river of Amazons was to be found in one of the vallies. Don Luis, however, fortunately possessed a map of the country; for the governor of Guayaquil had the generosity to restore him his private property, when he was brought in a prisoner by the guardia-costa: he had also money and a rifle.

"'After one more journey by night, we had penetrated sufficiently into the mountains to lose all apprehensions of a pursuit. We therefore proceeded by day through a wild country, which had probably never been traversed before by any, except wandering Indians; and lived entirely on the game my master killed. We passed within sight of Rucu-Pichinca, and after winding across the lower part of the Volcan de Cotopaxi, which was vomiting forth flames as we passed, we began to descend into the valley of Borja, through which

we saw the Moróna winding;—a deep and rapid river, constantly fed by the numerous mountain streams, that empty themselves into it.

"'On the second day after entering the valley, we came to a small fishing village on the banks of the river, where there were several canoes. The Indians were hospitable, as usual, and received us with their customary indifference; expressing no surprise whatever at seeing us, and making no enquiries, either from whence we came, or whither we were bound. Neither I nor the peon could understand a word of their language; but Don Luis contrived to explain himself to an old man, who appeared to exercise some authority among them, and who spoke a little Portuguese; for we were now on the borders of Brazil. Here we took leave of our peon, who, after a day's rest, returned to Quito, at which place Don Luis had hired him and the mules; and we embarked on the Rio Moróna, in a piragua paddled by four Indians.

"'Our canöéros pulled us rapidly down the stream to Fortalexa, a station of the Portuguese missionaries on the river of Amazons, where we landed, much to the surprise of the friars. They were greatly scandalised at seeing a young female travelling about the country, in the disguise which my mistress wore; and, when they were informed that she had not been as yet married to Don Luis, they insisted on separating them until that ceremony should be performed. They refused at the same time to solemnise it, until three Sundays, or at least three Fiestas had elapsed, that the

admonestaciones might be regularly published; for the Padres consider it of the greatest consequence to the Indians under their care, to be scrupulous in observing every ordinance of the church. The friars were anxious to gain time, that they might make their report of the strangers' arrival to the governor of Curúpa, on whom the missions depend; and might obtain instructions as to their being permitted to remain in that part of the country, or otherwise.

"'Don Luis, meanwhile, ingratiated himself so much with the Intendente of the mission, that immediately after the marriage, which took place before an answer arrived from Curúpa, he called him aside, and earnestly advised him to engage a canoe without a moment's delay, to convey him through the Rio Nigro to the Laguna de Parima; from whence he might reach the Orinoco, and take shelter in one of the Spanish settlements. The Padre assured him, that the jealousy of the Portuguese Government was so great, lest the interior of Brazil should be explored, and a communication opened between it and the neighbouring colonies, that any one found travelling without a passport would inevitably be sent to Pernambúco, where he would probably be imprisoned for life in the casas-matas under the castle. My master was so much alarmed at this intelligence, that he engaged a piragua that same hour to carry us to the lagoon, where we fell in with the large canoe which brought us here; and by means of a great deal of persuasion, and a little bribery, we prevailed on the Rio Negro fishermen to venture thus far with us. But I fear Doña

Elëuteria will scarcely reach Cäycára alive; for the heat of the weather, and the unusual exercise, have overcome her completely.'

" By this time, the negro had cooked half of the antelope, which he carried to the piragua; and having embarked with our olla of provisions, we pushed off from the island. As we pulled down the river, the stranger seated himself next me in the stern, where I was steering. Having produced a small flageolet, he played a melancholy air, which he told me was French, and which appeared to be a great favorite with the lady. She sat up under the awning to listen to it, until the thick night-fog had risen from the marshes, and began to roll across the water. The current was still so rapid in the Orinoco, although the rains had ceased for some time, that the next day we arrived at Los Capuchínos, and on the following evening anchored in safety at Cäycára.

" Our passenger, previously to taking his lady on shore, waited on the alcalde, who was at first apprehensive of permitting him to remain there, as he was fearful of offending the Spanish governor at Angostura. It was whispered in the village, that the new comer found means to argue him out of his scruples, in the usual and approved manner. Be that as it may, the alcalde certainly showed him a wonderful deal of civility;—more than he had ever been known to use towards any one before;—offering him a room in his own house, which was by far the best in Cäycára, and sending a litter down to the piragua, to bring the lady up. Don Luis rewarded us all handsomely; so that, together with

our successful fishery, this was one of the luckiest trips I ever made with the piragua. I never saw much of the lady afterwards; but I used to learn from the negro occasionally, that she had recovered from her sickness, although she scarcely ever appeared in the streets of the village.

"Nearly a year after this took place, I returned from Angostura, whither I had gone with a cargo of dried fish; and the first news I heard, on stepping ashore in Cāycára, was, that Doña Elēuteria had died, the day after having been delivered of a son. A short time previously, my wife Jacint had lost an infant; and on the recommendation of the Padre Cura, the alcalde sent her Don Luis's child, for the father's excessive grief had rendered him incapable of attending to anything. It was necessary to tear him by force from the *atahud*, before the poor lady could be removed from the alcalde's house to the campo-santo. He was for some time in a state of phrenzy; and would listen to no one,—not even to the Cura. By degrees he became more calm, though he shunned all society, passing entire days in the woods, from whence he came by night to throw himself on the grave, which was now his constant place of rest; for he never could be prevailed on to enter a house in the village except ours. His visits used to terrify my Jacinta, until she became accustomed to him, and was convinced that he was harmless. He would generally come to the cottage late at night, or before day-break, and seat himself, without speaking a word, or taking the least notice of any one. Jacinta, however, could easily guess the occasion of

his visit; and always gave him the infant, which he held quietly in his arms, until the day began to dawn, when he used to return to the woods.

"When the alcalde and Cura found that they could not prevail on him to live under a roof, they ceased to importune him, and contented themselves with sending the black servant every evening with provisions to be left at the grave: but if Don Luis did actually partake of them, it was so sparingly, the negro said, as to be scarcely perceptible; and it was universally believed that he lived entirely on wild fruits, and turtles' eggs from the sand banks. About a year after Doña Elëuteria's death, he ceased altogether from visiting his infant; and, although I went repeatedly with Jacinta at midnight, to watch if he came to the grave, we could see no more of him. A small canoe was missing, at the same time, from the landing-place where it had been hauled up; so that it was generally supposed that he had left Cäycára in a fit of phrenzy; and that, in all probability, he had been drowned in descending the Boca del Infierno, below Las Piedras. The negro, who came with him from Cüenca, searched the woods for leagues round the village; but in vain. He continued to live as servant with the alcalde; coming to our hut every day to see his young master, whom the Cura had christened Luis, after the name of his father.

"When the child attained an age capable of learning, the Padre took upon himself the care of his education. Although little Luis willingly spent some hours daily with him, he could never be prevailed on to leave the cottage of his nurse Jacinta,

for any length of time; nor would it have been easy for any one to persuade my wife to part with him, for she loved him as tenderly as if he had been her own child.

"One summer, when the boy had just reached his fifth year, I had been absent about a week with my partners in the piragua, fishing at the mouth of the Cabullári, where there was an excellent bank for catching *róvalos*. I returned early on a Sunday morning to Cäycára, with a tolerable load of fish; and suspected something was the matter, by not seeing little Luis on the sugar-loaf rock, near the landing-place, where he used always to station himself on the look-out for the return of the piragua, that he might carry the finest fish, if he could lift it, to his tutor the Cura. When I jumped ashore, I was met by a crowd of the village gossips, striving who should be the first to give me the news, that the child had disappeared the night before. Some said, that his father's ghost—Ave Maria!—had appeared to my wife; others, that the *duendes* [12] had carried him away, as having too much book-learning for any one out of holy orders; and not a few hinted, that in all likelihood he had fallen into the Orinoco, from the rocks where he used constantly to play while I was away fishing. All, however, agreed that he was certainly gone.

"I thought no more of the piragua nor the fish; but ran home to my cottage, where I found Jacinta in tears, sitting with the Padre Cura, who had come, on the first rumour of the child's loss, to enquire into the truth of the report. She told me that she had been lying awake towards midnight, listen-

ing to the wind that was blowing pretty fresh on thé river, until her fears had magnified it into a hurricane. She was just thinking of getting up to offer a candle, in my name, to San Antonio, when she heard the door opened, and supposed at first that I had returned from fishing. She ran hastily out of the *aposento* to meet me, as she thought; but was thunderstruck to see the tall figure of a man, partly dressed in deer skins, whom, notwithstanding her fright, she recognised as Don Luis, by the moonlight that shone as bright as day through the open door.

" Jacinta was luckily none of the fainting sort, but she was too much alarmed to call out for assistance; nor would it, indeed, have been of much service, for Cäycára is a straggling village, and our cottage is in the centre of a *conúco*, which I cleared with my own hands, about a mile from the river, and planted with various fruits and vegetables. She described the stranger to have been much paler than when he was last there; he still wore black moustachios; and had, besides, a bushy beard, which increased her alarm. He enquired, in a hoarse broken voice, for the boy Luis; and my wife, had not presence of mind to deny his being in the cottage, but pointed to where he lay in a net grass hammock. Don Luis snatched him up in his arms, wrapped as he was in a manta to keep him from the mosquitos, and rushed to the door; when Jacinta recovered sufficient courage to attempt to stop him, begging, for the love of Maria Santisima, that he would not deprive her of the child. The stranger disengaged himself from her

with violence; and disappeared the next moment in a wood, that lies between the *conúco* and a small creek running into the Orinoco.

"My poor wife remained for a minute panic-struck, gazing after him, and half persuaded that she was in a fearful dream; but, when she regained her senses, she ran into the village, half-dressed as she was, to alarm the neighbours. They were almost all too soundly asleep to be easily awakened; and when she succeeded in rousing them, and in explaining what had happened, she could get no volunteers to assist her in searching the borders of the creek. Most of the men were away fishing, and those who were at home were fully persuaded that she had seen Don Luis Philibert's spirit; if therefore they had been fearful of meeting the strange Frenchman while alive, nothing could have bribed them to run the risk of encountering him, now that he was a wandering ghost. Jacinta, however, had a bold heart, as I said before, and feared neither *animas* nor *duendes* at the moment; so she ran down to the rocks, in hopes of seeing my piragua, and getting help to search the creek. She had scarcely reached the landing-place, when she heard the sound of a paddle, and could just discern a small canoe gliding gently down the stream, guided by one man seated in the stern. It bounded so rapidly over the broken water, formed by the current off the point of Cäycára, that she soon lost sight of it.

"We were now fully convinced that Don Luis was still in being, and concealed somewhere in the neighbourhood; but, although I examined at dif-

ferent times every creek between the rocks of Cäycára and Angostura, and made enquiries of all the Indians whom we met on our fishing excursions, it was full five years more before the least light was thrown on this mysterious occurrence. About that time, a great many reports began to be spread concerning an *espanto*, which was said to have appeared to several fishermen and others, on the large rocky island forming one side of the Boca del Infierno. Lights had been seen in the small copse on the island; and strange noises heard by the benighted fishermen, which some described as resembling music. At length the pass, which had always been said to be haunted, was now more shunned than ever; and none but the river Indians, who are too familiar with spectral appearances to fear them, would venture to approach it after sunset, or indeed at any time, provided there was water enough in the Canal del Caÿmàn to float a canoe through. For my own part, although I then cared little for such things as apparitions, I never wished to trust the piragua among the rocky eddies of La Boca, if I could by any means avoid it: for I had then three children growing up; and they, as well as their mother, had nothing but the old boat and myself to trust to, besides the *conúco* which produced little except maiz.

"I had gone down to Angostura, as usual, with a load of fish, and was returning with a cargo of necessary articles of every description, as well for myself as for most of my neighbours; so that, what with the weight of merchandise, and of four friends who were returning with me, after selling

a new canoe at Guayana, the piragua was pretty deeply laden. It was the middle of summer; and, when we came to the entrance of the Caual del Caÿmàn, we found there was not water enough to float us over the rocks and shoals that lie in that channel: I was therefore obliged to push for the Boca del Infierno.

"Evening came on, as we crossed the wide bason formed by a circular bend of the Orinoco, in front of the dangerous pass; and the two gigantic rocks, which bent over either side of the entrance to the rapids, threw their long shadows gloomily across the smooth sheet of water. We could have wished to pass La Boca before dark, but it was in vain to attempt it before the morning breeze had set in; for there was a dead calm, as is always the case here at sunset in summer, and we were too much fatigued with rowing the heavy piragua all day, to relish the thoughts of facing such a rapid, without a breath of wind to assist us in ascending it. We made fast to the trunk of a tree growing out of the rock below the falls, and, as we were ten in number, laughed at the idea of an *espanto;* some among us even expressing a wish that we might see something of it. After having drawn lots for our turns of watching during the night, we all of us lay down to rest; except one, whose first turn it was to keep a look-out, and who happened to be of the number of those, who had particularly boasted of their disbelief in the existence of apparitions.

"I had not long been asleep in the stern-sheets, where I lay comfortably coiled away, before I was woke by our comrade of the watch; and found

him trembling in every joint, and almost incapable of uttering a word. At last he exclaimed, 'Ave Maria purisima! I have just heard the *espanto*, as clearly as ever I heard the church bell ring to vespers at Cäycára.'

"I must confess I felt rather startled, considering the reputation the place bore for being haunted. Besides, as we lay close under the projecting rock, we were in perfect darkness, and could have seen nothing, unless it had entered the piragua, notwithstanding its being a bright starlight night. After listening for a while, I heard the notes of a flageolet, indistinctly at first; but at intervals, when the night-breeze blew from the island, I could clearly make out the notes of a tune that I had not heard for many years; but which I immediately recognized as the same that Don Luis had played in the piragua, on the evening when we took him and his lady on board. I had now a clue to the mystery of the haunted pass, as well as to the sudden disappearance of the child; and was more than ever convinced that he was with his father, and that both were on this island. Nevertheless, I kept my suspicions a secret; determining to communicate them to the Padre Cura, on my arrival at Cäycára.

"The music ceased shortly afterwards, and I pretended to make light of it to my terrified comrade; but, on my turning away to go to sleep, I heard him wake anothe piragüéro, to whom he communicated his recent cause of alarm, with many exaggerations; bribing him, with some tobacco and a dram of aguardiente, to keep him company during the remainder of his watch. When I awoke, on

the following morning, I found our valiant camaràda entertaining all on board, with an account of the sounds he had heard during the night, calling on me as a witness to the truth of his narrative. However, as I professed to believe, that it was merely caused by a tribe of wandering Carrìbi Indians, dancing in the woods to the sound of their rude pipes; and as the peon, whom he had wakened, had heard nothing; his report was disregarded. My motive for discouraging every idea, which might lead my companions to suspect the truth, was, that I feared their indiscreet curiosity might tempt them to land on the island, and by so doing disturb Don Luis; for I had every reason to believe that, if he were intruded on in his seclusion, he would retire to some other place of concealment, which I might perhaps never have the good fortune to discover.

"On landing at Cäycára, I waited on the Cura, and acquainted him with the discovery I had made; requesting his advice as to how I had better proceed, for the purpose of obtaining an interview with Don Luis, in the hope of prevailing on him to restore the boy. Although I had now children of my own, I still felt the greatest interest for Luisíto; and could not patiently endure the idea of his leading a savage life on that desolate island, with no society nor instruction but that of a maniac father, as I fully believed Don Luis to be. The Padre commended my caution in having communicated the secret to no one but himself; and advised me to take a small canoe, and visit the island alone, under pretence of searching for iguanas, or turtles' eggs; by which means all suspicion would be avoided. I

determined, however, not to keep Jacinta in ignorance of the discovery I had made; and she was overjoyed, as I had anticipated, at the thoughts of once more embracing her foster-child, whom she still remembered with maternal affection. She exhorted me to lose no time in endeavouring to recover him; and I set off, the next morning, before day-break, in a canoe, on my return to the Boca del Infierno.

"As the rocks on the side of the island above the fall, facing the upper part of the river, are perpendicular, I was obliged to steer down the rapid passage, before it was possible for me to land. This was rather a dangerous experiment, on account of the violent eddies which whirled round the light canoe, notwithstanding all my efforts to steady its course with the paddle; but I at length managed to enter a narrow creek, between two arching rocks. Behind these was a small basin, perfectly concealed from all boats passing either way; as they always keep at the opposite side of the channel, by the main land, for the purpose of fastening warps to the trees on the bank. A canoe, which was hauled up under the shelter of a cavern in the rock, proved that my suspicions had been well founded; and, on landing, I saw the object of my search, seated under an algarróba tree, with his son beside him.

"They were both clad in undressed deer-skins; with caps made from the fur of the *nutria*, or river otter, which breeds on the island, The son was employed twisting a grass fishing-line; and the father was busy fastening parrots' feathers to the reeds of some arrows, which he had just finished pointing with splinters of bambu. The boy ap-

peared surprised, and even alarmed, at my approach; but Don Luis showed no signs of uneasiness, when he saw that I was unaccompanied. He recognised me immediately; and held out his hand in silence, continuing his occupation for some time, without taking any farther notice of my arrival. At last he looked up, and demanded abruptly what had brought me to the island, and whether his place of retreat was known to any other besides myself. I assured him that no one else, excepting his old friend the Cura, and my wife Juanita, were at all aware of his being alive; and proceeded to use all the arguments I could think of, to induce him to return with me to Cäycára, or at least to permit me to take his son there, but in vain. He scarcely answered my remonstrances, except by repeating that he had resolved never more to enter society; and concluded by assuring me that, if I persisted in attempting to alter his determination, he should be compelled to seek for some other place of refuge, so remote from the usual haunts of man, that there would be no danger of his being again molested. I was obliged, therefore, reluctantly to acquiesce; and promised him that I would never revert to the subject. He was content with this assurance; and expressed his willingness to see me occasionally, provided I would consent to come alone.

" He then led the way to a hut, which he had constructed with bambu, and covered with skins, so completely as to be impervious to rain. The island was frequented every summer by deer, which wade and swim across the Canal del Cäymán, for

the purpose of escaping from the mosquitos, which swarm in the savannas at that season, as well as of avoiding the panthers and jaguars, that infest the jungles on the main land. He dried venison sufficient, during the hot weather, to last him all the winter; and, as he had found a few hooks and lines in the canoe which he took from Cäycára, he caught abundance of fish in the eddies among the rocks. He now directed me to make his place of retreat known to the alcalde; and to request him to make restitution in his name, to the owner of the canoe, from the money that he had left in that magistrate's hands; also to send him, by me, some trifling articles which he mentioned, that were in his trunk at the village. When I took leave of him, he reiterated his determination to fly into the remotest depths of the forest, should his solitude be disturbed by any visitors whatever besides myself; and desired me to acquaint the alcalde and Cura with this his resolution.

" I punctually executed the commission he gave me, but the alcalde did not acquiesce in the Cura's opinion, that it would be advisable to leave Don Luis in undisturbed possession of the island. He insisted that it was incumbent on him to compel his return to society, for his son's sake, if not for his own; and gave orders for a party of fishermen to be immediately assembled, and proceeded with them to the island in my piragua, taking me, much against my inclination, as a guide to the landing place, which I had discovered.

" We succeeded, with considerable difficulty and risk, in getting on shore before day-light, lest Don

on guard hung drowsily, muffled in their ponchos, and chilled by the bleak morning breezes blowing over the swamps of Cunavichi.

As Päez and his attendants approached the pickets, they were challenged with "*Halto! quien vive?*"—answered, as usual, by "*America Libre!*" A dense white mist lay close to the ground, in many parts of the savanna; particularly over the marshes round the lake; and concealed the whole of the wood, in which the emigrants had taken shelter, except the tops of the lofty congria trees. Myriads of stars were still twinkling in the dark blue heaven, in which not a cloud was to be seen, except directly to the Eastward, where the faint grey dawn just began to be doubtfully perceptible. The *garzons*, or gigantic cranes, were stalking warily and in silence along the borders of the lagoon; and the short shrill crow of the wild-cock was answered from tree to tree.

Having cleared the swampy country, by passes known only to the Llanéros, the party pressed rapidly forward over the smooth plain, lying between Cunavichi and the mouth of the Aräuco; and they reached the sandy beach of Playa Arenósa, just as the sun rose behind the group of low islands, which are seen far to the East, in the centre of the Orinoco. The merchant boat, although one of those large clumsy lanchas seen only in this river, appeared diminutive as it lay on the majestic sheet of water. A shout from the escort, which echoed along the woods, aroused the lanchéros, who, having anchored at some distance from the shore, according to their usual custom, as a necessary

precaution against that plague of all Tropical rivers, the mosquito, were indolently stretched at the bottom of the boat. Páez ordered his escort to unsaddle, and wait for his return under the trees; and the lancha having approached the beach, he embarked with Mons. Bonjean, the old pilot, and his youthful lance-bearer, who was his constant close attendant.

As the village of Los Capuchínos is situated exactly opposite to Playa Arenósa, it was necessary to sail for a considerable distance up the side of the stream, in the slack-water formed by the eddies close to the bank, previously to crossing the strongest part of the current; the river being in that part about four or five miles broad. The breeze had now commenced, and the lanchéros set a large latteen sail, which impelled the boat steadily through the smooth water; while one of the Indians, standing up in the bows, sounded occasionally with a long bambu, repeating each time to the pilot the depth of water, in a sort of monotonous recitative. When the lancha had reached a point of land, which the pilot considered at a sufficient distance above the landing place to which they were bound, he gave the word,—"*A la voga, muchachos!*" and every lanchéro having seized an oar, he steered the vessel so as to cross the stream in an oblique direction. As they gained the centre of the river, the point of land which they had left appeared to recede rapidly from them; and the current swept them down fast, notwithstanding the efforts of six stout Indians, assisted by the breeze, which freshened as the sun rose higher in the heavens.

The small village church of Los Capuchínos, surrounded by tall Morichi palm trees, which bent over the low roof, and the long ranges of temporary barracks erected for the accommodation of Bolívar's troops, began to be seen plainly as the boat approached the Southern bank; and the notes of the bugles, practising in the woods outside the village, were distinctly heard at intervals. A crowd of idlers from the camp thronged round the landing-place, eager to see whom the lancha might be bringing over to head-quarters, and to enquire the news from the army in the Llanos. As soon as Páez was recognised, an officer's picket, which was stationed at the landing place, was hastily turned out to receive him, from a low canoe-shed on the shore, then used as a guard-house. Two soldiers immediately pressed forward, to carry the Gefe de los Llanos out of the boat to the sands; and, as he advanced up the beach, the throng made room for him on all sides, with far greater demonstrations of respect, than he was in the habit of receiving in his own camp. Although his people adored him, they were so seldom reminded of the forms of salutation, that Páez used often to say, that he must go among the infantry to look for *Salaméros*, although he could not wish for better followers than his rough Llanéros. He was, however, closely surrounded by the officers who stood near, for each of whom he had some cheerful word of greeting; and was accompanied by them, talking and laughing in his usual unceremonious manner, to the door of Bolívar's quarters.

The Libertadòr, muffled in a blue capote, and

wearing the small forage cap, bound with red, of a private artillery-man, was traversing with hasty steps an unfurnished apartment, the door of which was thronged with aides-de-camp and adjutants, waiting for orders. He was dictating to his Secretary Perez, who sat at a small deal table, writing a proclamation addressed to the inhabitants of Tunja in New Grenada. Copies were to be taken of this, when finished, by every officer in the army capable of writing a legible hand; for there was then only one printing-press in Venezuela, which had been brought to Angostura by a creole of Martinique. He had undertaken to teach some young Guayaneses the art of printing; but could not be prevailed on to follow the army with the apparatus, as Bolívar desired.

Don Simòn turned hastily to Pãez, on seeing him enter the room, and eagerly enquired what news he had brought from the plains. He was disappointed, and apparently vexed, at learning that Pãez's only object in seeking this interview was, that he might endeavour to persuade the Libertadòr to return to the Llanos with his army, and, by checking Morillo's progress, put a stop to the destruction of farm-houses, which had been incessantly carried on by the Spaniards, since they first entered the savannas. He painted in the strongest colours the distresses of the inhabitants, who had been driven for refuge beyond the remote marshes of Cunavíchi; and ended by insisting on his either appointing an early day for his return to the plains, with his infantry and artillery, or on permitting him to undertake the task of expelling

the enemy, by means of his cavalry alone, on the first favorable opportunity for an engagement that should present itself.

Pãez was the only patriot general who would venture to argue with Bolívar, or to contradict his opinions: he was also the only one to whom the Libertadòr would condescend to explain his plans. Bolívar accordingly laid before him the despatches that he had just received from Santandèr, who had penetrated into New Grenada by the plains of Cazanares. They contained intelligence of an insurrection that had broken out in favour of La Patria, in the provinces of Tunja and Zocorro; the inhabitants of which had taken advantage of the royalist troops being drawn off by Morillo, when he concentrated his forces for the incursion into the Llanos. Deputies had been sent to Santandèr from these provinces, with assurances of their readiness to come forward with ample assistance, both of men and money, as soon as Bolívar should cross the Cordilléra, and appear in the Entre-Andes at the head of a respectable army.

The Libertadòr reminded Pãez, that Morillo must necessarily soon receive intelligence of this popular commotion, by despatches from Truxillo; and that doubtless he would be compelled to detach one of the divisions of his army, for the purpose of opposing Santandèr. He farther assured him that, as soon as the reinforcements he daily expected from Barcelona should arrive at Los Capuchínos, he would immediately cross the Orinoco, and unite his army to that in the savannas. He entreated him, in the mean time, to adhere scrupulously to

the plan which he had previously recommended to him, of taking every opportunity of harassing Morillo's troops, without exposing his own people to the doubtful event of a general engagement; and at length succeeded in pacifying for a time the ardent Llanéro, although he failed to convince him.

Bolívar then invited him to attend a review of the army, which was about to take place; but Päez declined it, being determined to retire immediately to Cunavíchi. A *flechéra*, or long light canoe, carrying twelve paddles, was in readiness at the landing place, to convey the chief of the savannas and his lance-bearer over the river. As they paddled across, so rapidly as scarcely to deviate from a straight course, the Indians sung the Marri-Marri, or Orinoco canoe-song, which is generally an extemporaneous effusion, prompted by any existing circumstances that may strike their imagination.

[13] "Marrimarri! Pachócos hermanos
"Rompen canalétes con brío;—
"Pues llevamos el flor de los Llanos,
"Päez, el guapo invencído Caudillo.

"Sus lancéros le estan atizbando
"En la playa dedonde saliò;
"Pues, al llegar el Xefe a su mando,
"Los llenara de gloria ý valòr.

"No desmayen al soplar el viento!—
"Los chuvascos no hay que temer!—
"Voguémos, llenos de contento,
"Desde el Alva hasta al anochecer."

Päez, who lay stretched at full length under the

low awning of the flechéra, paid little attention to the song of the canoéros. His mind was far otherwise employed, regretting the many inactive moments which he foresaw must necessarily intervene, before he should be at liberty to retaliate on the invaders the miseries they had inflicted on his country. His page, Panchito, however, had heard, and fully comprehended, the obscure hint that the Indians had given of the approach of a *chuvasco*;—one of those minor hurricanes, which are occasionally experienced on the Orinoco, especially about the time of the summer solstice.

Although the boy was perfectly fearless on horseback, and in action, he was by no means exempt from the superstitions of his countrymen, the Llanéros, who consider singing, while on the water, as a mere tempting of Providence. Besides, he felt completely out of his element on the broad Orinoco, where no skill in swimming could possibly avail his chief or himself, were any untoward accident to happen to the flechéra. Nevertheless, as Pãez appeared to take no notice whatever of the lowering appearance of the sky, nor of the sudden and impetuous gusts of wind, bursting from different quarters, and as suddenly subsiding, which had already taken place of the steady morning breeze, the page considered it a point of duty to be also silent on the subject. He resolved, therefore, to stifle whatever apprehensions might arise in his mind, rather than run the risk of incurring a rebuke, by disturbing his general's meditations.

As the flechéra left the land, the violence of the

squalls increased. They blew directly against the course of the stream; and an abrupt ripple began to rise, so high as occasionally to wash over the gunwhale; while the irregular force, which the wind exerted against the awning, gave considerable disturbance to the efforts of the canoeros, who found great difficulty in keeping the light vessel steady to its course. Panchíto's alarm and indignation, against the unskilfulness or carelessness (as he thought) of the Indians, now got the better of his usual sang-froid; and he broke out with—"*Malháya la flechéra, ý los perros que la vogan!*"

"How now, niño Panchíto?" said Päez, roused from his reverie by this exclamation; "What fault have you to find with the Indians, or with their canoe?"

"Os Merced did not hear their song then? It foretold a hurricane; and you may see that it is gathering already. San Antonio! but I wish we were safe on our horses. You can swim the Aräuco with ease, mi Xefe! and perhaps the Apúri; but I doubt whether you would be able to reach yonder shore, if this calabash of a canoe were to turn over. As for me, I know I could not; and your lance would be lost."

Päez looked round at the darkening sky; and saw that there was indeed every appearance of an approaching hurricane. During the short time that had elapsed, since they had left the landing place at Los Capuchínos, the heavens had been covered by a thick inky canopy, which had arisen at once from every quarter of the horizon. Be-

neath this, and evidently at a very small elevation, streaks of lighter coloured clouds, usually called by seamen the *scud*, were crossing each other rapidly in different directions, and gradually approaching the zenith, about which they appeared to revolve, as around the vortex of a whirlwind. The hollow roar of the approaching *chuvasco* was at length heard, as it burst down from among the mountains a few miles below; and its effect on the water was distinctly seen, by the line of foam that accompanied its headlong course.

Not a moment was to be lost; for, if the squall were to strike the flechéra while the awning was standing, it would inevitably have whirled the vessel over instantaneously. Päez hastily drew the long sharp *cuchillo cachi-blanco*, which he always wore in his girdle, and cut away the thongs of hide securing the awning, which fell overboard just before the *chuvasco* reached that part of the river. The Indian, who steered the flechéra, had taken the precaution to turn its head to the approaching hurricane; but the paddles were of no farther service, than merely to keep the vessel in that position, as it drove up against the current. Wave after wave struck the canoe in rapid succession, throwing so much spray over it, as to keep two of the canoéros employed baling the water out with large calabashes. The other Indians knelt steadily in the bottom of the flechéra, with their long coarse hair streaming back on the gale; and watched attentively every motion of the light vessel, counteracting its tendency to drive broadside to the squall, by a vigorous stroke or two with

their *canalétes.*[14] They were the better enabled to be on the alert, by kneeling with their faces towards the bows; for this position is always maintained in a canoe, instead of looking towards the stern, as is the custom in a row-boat.

There had been, as yet, comparatively little danger; but the chuvasco now began to veer round, and blow across the river with undiminished fury. The water broke over the flechéra in every direction; and it was no longer possible to steady it to the wind. The steersman, who had hitherto kept silence, now observed that it was fortunate for them all that "*El Xefe*" was in the canoe; for the guard at the landing place at Los Capuchínos would undoubtedly send the French merchant-boat to assist him: whereas, had none but Indians been in danger, no one would have thought it worth while to pull an oar to save them from drowning. In a few seconds, a wave, rather larger than ordinary, broke over the side, and filled the piragua, which sunk under the weight it carried; but the Indians, accustomed to similar accidents, threw themselves into the water on each side, and held it upright with one hand, while they swam with the other. After some minutes of awkward suspence, the lancha was plainly seen scudding up the river under a close-reefed sail, by means of which it soon succeeded in getting abreast of the flechéra, as it was now drifting down with the current, having settled so deep in the water as to be no longer under the influence of the wind. The lanchéros then lowered their sail, and pulled alongside of the canoe, from which they took Pãez, and

his page Panchíto; the latter still firmly grasping that great object of his solicitude, his chieftain's lance.

The old pilot, who had pushed off in the boat with his rowers, on the instant of his first perceiving the danger of the flechéra, would have left the Indians to their fate, without the least compunction, had it not been for the express command of Pãez, who insisted on their being received on board. He complied, though rather reluctantly; muttering at the same time, that the "*perros salváges*" deserved a much longer swim, for their carelessness in crossing the Orinoco, at such a season, and with so valuable a freight.

As the lancha approached the shore, Pãez could see that his escort had been under the greatest anxiety on his account. One of them, who had climbed into the branches of a caujara tree, to look out from thence for his approach, had already seen the danger to which he was exposed, and had communicated his apprehensions to his companions. They had all mounted their horses, with some indistinct idea of being better able to assist their chief in that posture; and advanced into the river, as far as they could without actually swimming. Their joy was excessive on seeing him in safety. They pressed round him on landing, each eagerly endeavouring to impress on his mind the imprudence of crossing a river, which was too broad for a horse to swim. The pilot was the next object of their attention and thanks. They all embraced him, assuring him of the eternal gratitude of the Guardia de Honor; and protesting that he should

never want a good horse, nor a fat bullock, when he visited the Llanos.

Pãez then bade adieu to his old friend; and took the road to Cunavíchi, followed by his escort.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MAROMEROS.—THE LETTER.—DESERTION.

Juliet. "My only love sprung from my only hate!
"Too early seen, unknown; and known too late:
"Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
"That I must love a loathed enemy."
Romeo and Juliet.

A MAROMERO, or travelling mountebank, had arrived meanwhile at the ranchos of the emigrants, with his family and attendant performers; and had collected around him a crowd of women and children, mingled with idlers from the camp, all eagerly watching the preparations he was making for a display of skill in dancing, and feats of activity. He was one of that class of Mestizo natives, who are called, in many parts of South America, *Gitános* and *Chinganéros*, in allusion, most probably, to the wandering vagabond way of life they have adopted; for there would seem to be no reason to believe that they really belong to that singular

race of outcasts, from whom they derive their name, and who are supposed to be as yet confined to the Eastern quarters of the globe.

These people are held in utter contempt and abhorrence by all true Indians; and not even the meanest tribes among them will hold any intercourse with the Chinganéros, whom they consider degraded by their buffoonery to the level of monkeys. Their agility and humour, nevertheless, rendered their occasional visits always welcome to the light-hearted Criollos; and even the supercilious Spaniards deigned at times to relax from their haughty gravity, and to smile at their unpolished gambols. At the hottest periods of the *guerra á la muérte*, the Chinganéros were considered as privileged exceptions to the general rule, which admitted of no sort of neutrality in the sanguinary contest, and were freely permitted to visit the encampments of both patriots and royalists, for the diversion of the soldiery. As they belonged to no party, so they could scarcely be looked on as spies; and, although they had not the least scruple in conveying such intelligence as lay in their way, or even occasionally becoming bearers of private messages from one side to the other, still they atoned for this conduct, or rather neutralised its effects, by the perfect impartiality of their communications. In a word, they were considered too despicable and insignificant a race for anger, or even for serious attention.

Pãez called aside the chief Maroméro, who approached him with all the *salamería* and grimaces of his profession; and, on questioning him, learned

that he had just come from exhibiting in Morillo's camp. The Chinganéro, who concealed considerable shrewdness under the semblance of folly, which it suited his purpose to assume, informed him that the Spaniards had advanced to within two days' march of the emigrants' place of concealment; but that they appeared to be apprehensive of entangling themselves among the unknown marshes of Cunavíchi. He also brought the first news of the unhappy fate that had befallen the two wounded men, who had been left behind after the night skirmish in the neighbourhood of Caña Fistola. Having at length obtained permission to commence his *maróma*, he assembled his companions, about twenty in number, who were fantastically dressed and painted; each wearing on his head a coronet of divers-coloured feathers, in imitation of the ancient Indian costume.

They began by exhibiting several complicated dances, which they executed to the music of three or four vihuélas, played by the females of the party, accompanied by rattles made of calabashes, containing grains of maiz, and by the hollow sound of a large drum, formed out of a log of wood, and covered at each end with a deer-skin. The women sang, at intervals, some of the wild Indian melodies; after which, each Maroméro showed in turn some feat of agility.

Lastly, their leader fixed in the ground a bambu pole of about twelve feet in height, to the top of which were fastened twenty long strips of cotton cloth, resembling broad ribbons. These were dyed of the various bright colours, which the Indians

are enabled to produce, by their intimate knowledge of the properties of roots and barks. Each Maroméro seized the lower end of a ribband; and, having ranged themselves in a circle round the pole, every alternate performer faced in a different direction. They then moved round in a slow measure, guided in their motions by some verses recited by the women; and, as they crossed each other in the dance, the fillets became gradually interwoven, so as to bear some resemblance to an immense umbrella.

While the spectators were attentively observing this ingenious device, the chief Maroméro took the opportunity of walking round the assembly with a plaited palm-leaf basket in his hand, in which he collected the contributions of those who were disposed to reward the exertions of the performers. As he passed the group of females surrounding a raised seat, which had been hastily prepared by the Llanéros for the accommodation of Doña Rosäura, he caught the eye of Juanita Gomez, who was seated behind her mother; and, while addressing some of his privileged witticisms to those who were nearest her, contrived to drop a letter at her feet, unperceived by any one, and passed on without taking any further notice.

By the time he returned to his companions, they had completed the ingenious manœuvre; which, though so frequently performed as to have long ceased to be a novelty in the Llanos, was always hailed by universal applause. They then stood still, facing outwards, and sang in chorus their thanks for the liberality of the spectators; after which, they un-

twisted the variegated canopy, by reversing the dance; and the exhibition concluded.

Juanita Gomez lost not a moment in retiring from the assembled multitude, into the thickest part of the wood, to read the scroll which she had so unexpectedly received; and found that it was written, as she had conjectured, by her royalist cousin, Andres Castro.

The writer lamented deeply his misfortune in belonging to a service, by which he had been involved, contrary to his expectation in entering it, in a warfare against his native country, and those he loved best. Circumstances, he added, had lately occurred, which had disgusted him, beyond measure, with the conduct of those he was at present bound to obey. Finally, he implored her to answer him by the bearer, whom he had engaged to return to the neighbourhood of the Spanish camp, by the assurance of receiving a handsome reward; and expressed a hope, that she would appoint some part of the savanna, at a secure distance from both camps, as a place of meeting, where he might once more behold her, after an absence of so many years. This, he assured her, was practicable without the slightest danger; as she was well acquainted with the country, through which they had often wandered together in happier times.

Juanita had received several letters from her cousin, since his return from Europe, all of which she had communicated unreservedly to her mother, who had seen no reason to disapprove of Castro's attachment; considering his bearing a commission in the royalist army as the only obstacle to his union

with her daughter. But as the billéte mentioned the possibility of their meeting,—though it were but for a moment, and under the most discouraging circumstances,—the young Llanéra wanted resolution to reveal it, lest Paulíta Gomez should forbid her attempting to accomplish the interview; an event which she had so long and so ardently desired, that the hazards to which she might be exposed were completely overlooked.

Andres Castro hinted in his letter at circumstances, which had rendered him dissatisfied with his present service. Juanita knew not that this referred to the barbarous system of *guerra á la muerte* adopted in the Spanish army, and more particularly to Morillo's conduct with respect to her brother; for Felípe had been supposed, by the whole army, to have been killed in action; and his relations had reconciled themselves in some measure to his loss, by the reflection that he had fallen in defence of his native plains. Had she even been aware that he had been butchered in cold blood, while wounded and prisoner, it would but have given an additional stimulus to the exertions she resolved to make, to detach the object of her earliest affection from a party that was guilty of such atrocities.

Might it not be in her power, she thought, to persuade her cousin to renounce the tyrant's service, and to join the cause of liberty? And might she not hereafter exult in the happy consciousness, of having been the means of restoring a son of Venezuela to the bosom of his country? She was indeed aware, that the step which she meditated taking was, to say the least, imprudent; but she justified

it in her own mind, by the importance of the object in view. Besides, how could she bear to disappoint her cousin?—how could she bear to disappoint herself? She reflected, that nothing was easier than to absent herself without incurring suspicion; for she generally passed the night in the open air, (as is usual in the savannas), near the rancho of her female cousins in the Gamarras; so that, were she to set off on horseback any evening, when the emigrants were assembled round the Doña Rosāura's hut, she would have time to ride to a considerable distance, and return before day-break the following morning.

Having decided on venturing, she procured paper and pencil from the Cura's nieces, under pretence of copying one of the Maroméro's songs; and wrote a few hurried lines, naming the Estéro del Chigüiri, which was about four hours' hard riding from Cunavíchi, as the place of meeting; and fixed the time for the third night from the date. She delivered the letter, containing this appointment, to the Chinganéro, who loitered about the huts purposely to have an opportunity of receiving an answer for his employer. She then sought her cousin, Peta Gamarra, and requested advice and assistance to further the execution of her project. Her confidante readily agreed to conceal her absence by every possible stratagem. She moreover promised to procure her a horse for the occasion; and they both waited for the appointed evening, with nearly, if not altogether, equal anxiety.

As the time approached, they were more than

once apprehensive that some unexpected movement of Pāez's troops, or of the Spanish army, might throw obstacles in the way of the interview; but the evening at length arrived, and the cousins saw, with suppressed exultation, the usual assembly collecting round Doñ̃o Rosāura's rancho. They withdrew, with light and hasty steps, to the border of the lagoon, where Peta, mindful of her promise, had concealed a saddled horse; and Juanita, muffled in a manta, and concealing her long hair under a sombréro, mounted with a palpitating heart. She reminded her cousin to repeat a double rosary for her safety and success; and took the road to the Estéro del Chigüíri.

The fate of Felípe Gomez, meanwhile, had made a deep and lasting impression on Castro's mind. He abhorred the cruelty that could authorise the inhuman act; and resented the indignity that had been offered him, when his entreaties for his kinsman's life were rejected, by the Spanish commander-in-chief, with contumely. Every deed of the invading army, since it had entered the plains, had served to open his eyes to the flagrant injustice of the cause, to support which he had been unexpectedly brought from Spain to his native country. He had witnessed,—and with shame for participating even by his presence in such outrage,—the burning of villages and farm-houses, and the slaughter of such defenceless peasants as had been so unfortunate as to fall into the royalists' hands; and he could plainly see, that the leaders of the troops, among which he was unwillingly enrolled, were rather instigated by the thirst for revenge, and by

the desire of gratifying their innate propensity to deeds of cruelty, than stimulated by the honourable wish to serve their sovereign's cause.

The struggle, indeed, was not, nor had it been since the commencement of the revolution, between the king of Spain and his colonies; but between a horde of barbarians on one side, headed by a few military despots, whose chief, if not only aim, was to enrich themselves by the most unexampled and rigorous extortion; and a persecuted people, on the other, goaded to resistance by the injuries they had suffered, and at length aroused to the necessity of resorting to arms, as a refuge from oppression.

Independently of these public considerations, which forcibly claimed his attention, Castro's private feelings had been lately more than once grossly outraged. Morillo had taken every opportunity, since his unavailing interference in behalf of his cousin, of indulging in illiberal sarcasms against all creoles indiscriminately. On one occasion, Castro having ventured to reply to what he conceived an unjustifiable indignity, he had been ordered under arrest for some days by his offended commander-in-chief. His friend, La Torre, had warmly participated in his feelings of resentment; and had more than once declared, with his usual impetuosity, that had he himself experienced similar treatment, he would not have remained an hour longer in a situation in which he must submit to it.

Although this avowal of his sentiments did not actually amount to directly advising him to such a decided step, as that of going over to the patriots, his friend's sentiments had their full weight in

Castro's mind; and a circumstance occurred, just after he had sent the billete to Juanita Gomez, that fully determined him to leave the royalist army, in the only possible way open to him;—namely, by instantly joining his own countrymen, and atoning, by his future services, for the guilt of having fought so long against their liberties.

The circumstance was as follows. The guards and pickets, which were appointed for camp duty, had been told off and paraded, as usual, in front of the army. The field-officer of the day had inspected them, and was about to give out the countersign, when Morillo rode along the parade, attended by his aides-de-camp. He happened to observe Castro among the officers, who had just fallen in for guard; and enquired to what post he was appointed. On learning that he was ordered for an out-line picket, he desired that he should be exchanged to some camp guard; saying that the royalist army was too near that of the insurgents, for a Criollo to be trusted with a detachment, at any distance from the main body.

Castro considered this insult, offered him before the whole army, as fully sufficient to release him from all farther obligations to serve under the Spanish colours; and he now looked forward with eagerness to the time, when he should be in a situation to avenge himself on one, whom he had now every reason to regard as both personally and nationally his most bitter enemy. He was animated in his resolution, had it required to be confirmed, by receiving the answer to his billete through the trusty Maromero; and had now only to hope that

his turn of guard might not happen on the appointed evening; for, although determined to leave the service, he shrunk from the idea of adding to desertion the more atrocious military offence, of abandoning a post that had been solemnly confided to him. This was, however, less likely to be the case; as, in consequence of the general's distrust of his principles, so publicly expressed, he was now no longer appointed to any but home pickets.

When the retreat was beat, on the night of his projected desertion, he attended the last roll-call of his troop which he was ever to hear, with feelings of deep dejection. Although he had fully made up his mind to the necessity of the step he was about to take, and was perfectly satisfied that he consulted his honour, rather by joining the ranks of his countrymen, than by continuing in the service of their oppressors, yet he could not divest himself of the idea, that every one who addressed him had penetrated his intentions. He ordered his horse to be saddled, without exciting the least suspicion, his servant supposing him to be ordered on duty for visiting-rounds; and everything being prepared, as he of course took nothing with him but his military valise, he entered young La Torre's tent, to see, probably for the last time, the only friend he had cause to regret, among the companions whose society he was about to leave.

He found his lively comrade seated on his camp bed, surrounded by several brother officers, who were enjoying their cigars, the only luxury that still remained of the stores which they had brought with them from Caraccas; no supplies having been

able to reach the army from the depôt at' San Fernando, in consequence of the activity of the detachment under Colonel Rangel. Castro reported the roll-call, as usual, and took his leave; pleading indisposition as his excuse for refusing La Torre's pressing request that he would remain. He then mounted the horse, which his servant held in readiness, and rode slowly through the limits of the camp; after which, he gave his horse the rein, and soon lost sight of the Spanish watch-fires.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PATRIOT CHIEF.—AN AMBUSH.

Wild as the scream of the curlieu,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men.

Lady of the Lake.

Colonel Estevan Rangèl, who, as has been already related, was detached by Päez from the camp at Caña Fistola, with orders to cut off the communication between the Spanish rear-guard under Lopez, (which had fortified itself in the ruins of San Fernando,) and Morillo's army in the savannas, was a native of the mountainous country about Mérida. His father, Don Cypriano Rangèl, an European, had formerly been governor of Mérida, and had acquired large estates in the

neighbourhood of that city. He was a member of the Junta Suprema in the year 1809.; at the time when Venezuela had come to the determination of adopting the same measures for securing tranquillity, as had already been taken by the different provinces of Spain herself.

Don Cypriano was also one of those members of the congress at Caraccas, who signed the first declaration of colonial independence, on the memorable 5th of July, 1811. By this act, as well as by having served as second in command to the brave though unfortunate Marquez de Toro, on the unsuccessful expedition against the hostile department of Maracäybo, he had rendered himself conspicuous among the earliest partizans of the revolution; and was consequently one of those marked for destruction by the Spanish Government, on the first convenient opportunity.

It was not long before he fell into the power of his enemies. He was numbered among the first victims to the sanguinary vengeance of Monteverde; having been so severely wounded, in a battle which preceded his surrender, that he was obliged to be carried in a bullock waggon, together with several other unfortunate prisoners, in a similar situation, to the Plaza, which was appointed for the daily executions. As an aggravation of the punishment, in the cases of those who had been previously members of the congress, or had in any way distinguished themselves as leaders in the struggle for liberty, they were sentenced to expiate the treason of which they were accused, on the scaffold, by the hands of the common hangman; the privilege of

dying like soldiers being denied, with studied malignity, to their earnest request.

Don Estevan, who was then barely seventeen years old, had accompanied his father in those early campaigns; and had shared his prison, when Monteverde violated the solemn treaty under which he capitulated. On account of his youth, such mercy as the Spanish general could afford was extended to him. He was publicly flogged at each corner of the Plaza, together with several other young and distinguished patriots of the same age; who, in addition to undergoing this barbarous punishment, were compelled to witness the execution of their relations and friends, which took place immediately after.

With refined cruelty, Don Estevan was placed beneath the very gibbet on which his brave father was to suffer. Surrounded as they were by guards, they could only bid each other adieu by mute gestures; but the youth then vowed solemnly to revenge most amply his father's death, and his own disgrace, or to perish in the attempt.

When the execution was over, the surviving prisoners were marched back to their dungeon; and from thence were sent to work in chains on the fortifications of Mompox. The severe labour at which they were obliged to slave, with scarcely any intermission, from day-break to night; the scanty sustenance allowed them by Government; and the unwholesome damps of the casas-matas, into which they were crowded by night, without even straw to keep their wearied limbs from the moist pavement, speedily released the greater number from their bondage.

These evils were, nevertheless, as nothing in Don Estevan's estimation. The scene which took place in the Plaza of Caraccas was ever present to him; and he was sustained under every description of hardships, privations, and sickness, by the hopes of vengeance. He was never seen to converse with his fellow prisoners, and yet he executed his daily task without a murmur, and with apparent alacrity; so that, by degrees, he acquired the good will even of the jailor, who concluded that his spirit had been broken by the stripes he had received, and that his father's fate had effectually terrified him into docility and subordination. A favourable report was accordingly made, respecting him, to the military governor of Mompox, at his monthly inspection of the prisoners; and his irons were ordered to be discontinued, with a promise that, if his conduct should continue, during the ensuing six months, to be as satisfactory to his task-master as it had hitherto been, he should be exempt from daily labour at the works, and should remain a prisoner at large, until the term of his punishment should have expired.

No sooner did he find himself free from bonds, than he fled to the mountains of Mérida; concealed by day in the woods, and travelling by night, until he reached his paternal estate. He found, on his arrival, that it had been confiscated and sold by the Colonial Government, pursuant to a decree to that effect of the Spanish Regency at Cadiz. On making himself known to some of the former tenants of his father, he was eagerly received by them, with all the kindness then in

their power to show him; and was hid, beyond all possibility of discovery, in huts which they built for his use in the most rèmote quebràdas, or rocky glens, that could be found in the habitable part of the Cordilléra.

He found the payzános universally disgusted with the conduct of their new landlord, who was perfectly well aware of the precarious nature of his tenure; (which would of course be null and void, as soon as the patriots should regain possession of the country;) and was therefore resolved to make the most he possibly could of the estate, while he could keep it in his possession. For this purpose, he raised the rents, (which was quite an unusual proceeding in any part of South America,) and insisted on all arrears being instantly paid up; threatening, in case of failure, to denounce the defaulter as a concealed insurgent, and to call in the aid of Spanish soldiers from the garrison of Truxillo, to enforce payment, or to distrain cattle in lieu of it.

The indignation of the tenants at the ignominious execution of their old landlord, Don Cypriano, as well as at the cruel treatment of his son, whom they considered to be most unjustly deprived of his paternal estate, knew no bounds. They were readily induced to rise *en masse*, as many as were capable of bearing arms, to the number of about fifteen hundred, chiefly belonging to the immediate neighbourhood.

Simòn Bolívar, who had just returned from Santo Domingo with arms and volunteers, was then collecting an army in the valley of Zogamozo,

by permission of the independent state of Cundinamarca; and was preparing to cross the Cordilléra, for the purpose of advancing once more to the assistance of his native province. The reinforcement which young Rangèl brought with him, although consisting of an unarmed and undisciplined multitude was opportune and acceptable. Bolívar penetrated into the province of Cumanà, at the head of this expedition of recruits, who soon found means of supplying all deficiencies in arms, ammunition, and clothing, by surprising and defeating Monteverde at Vigorima and Aräuri.

The loss on the side of the patriots was necessarily great, in these and the succeeding conflicts; so that, when Morillo entered the savannas, Rangèl, who had attained the rank of colonel, could not muster quite five hundred of his original followers from Mérida. These were formed into a corps of lancers, inferior to none in the Venezuelan armies; each soldier carrying a carbine also, by which means the regiment was capable of acting occasionally as infantry, when the nature of the ground required it. The lance-banners were of white cotton, with a red lance-blade in the centre; and the corps had sworn neither to give nor take quarter, on any occasion, nor under any circumstances whatever.

Such was the leader, and such the troops, detached to harass the rear of the Spanish army. They swam the Aräuco at the pass of Caujaràl; and halted at the ruined village of San Juan de Pallára. This was one of the neatest and most populous villages on the borders of the Llanos,

previous to the late inroad of the royalists ; but the inhabitants deserted it on the approach of Morillo, and fled to Cunavíchi. The Spanish general issued orders for its destruction, as a punishment for their defection ; but his troops, although far from being averse to such a command, had but partially succeeded in executing it. The thick mud walls of the houses defied their exertions, during the short stay they made there ; nevertheless, most of the roofs, which were thatched with palm leaves, were burned ; and the blackened remains of the rafters gave a desolate appearance to the place. The few doors which still remained, by far the greater part having been broken up for fuel, were scorched by the flames that had consumed the interior of the buildings. Along the streets were strewed fragments of various articles of furniture, wantonly shattered to pieces ; and baskets of all sizes and forms, with clothes and bedding, thrown out of the cottages during the search that had been made for more valuable plunder, lay trampled in the sand.

In the centre of the Plaza, and at different parts of the out-skirts, where pickets had been stationed, were still to be seen the embers of the watch-fires, which had evidently been supplied with fuel by the antique carved cedar chests, heavy mahogany tables, and cumbrous *escános*, or settles, dragged for that purpose from the nearest houses. The priest's neat cottage, next to the church, had shared in the general work of devastation. His furniture, which was of a more modern shape, and better materials, than that of his parishioners, had been piled up and burned against the white-washed

wall, as the readiest means of disfiguring it. The books composing his library, which he had been unable to remove, although of incalculable value to the secluded Cura of a remote country village, lay torn and scattered about the square in front of the windows.

The church itself had indeed escaped the flames, probably because the roof was tiled; but the doors were torn down, and splintered by shot fired at them in wanton mischief; while the images of the saints, which had formerly decorated the walls, and had been looked up to with superstitious reverence, were thrown from their niches, and lay prostrate on the earthen floor. The sacred building had been occupied as a barrack, by a party of cavalry, of which evident traces still remained; and it now gave shelter, during the heat of the day, to the wild cattle of the neighbourhood. A few gaunt half-starved dogs, which appeared to await the return of their masters, howled at the doors of the deserted cottages; and searched the extinguished fires of the Spanish camp, for the bones that were scattered round them.

Rangèl decided on making this place the head-quarters of his corps; and posted two small pickets in the forest, which extends between it and San Fernando, at the only two roads leading from that town to the plains; with orders to fall back and give him notice, if they observed any detachment of the enemy approaching in the direction of the savanna. He had not remained many days in this position, when a carbineer, belonging to one of the advanced posts, galloped hastily into the village a

little after day-break, bringing intelligence to Rangèl, that a convoy of mules, supposed to be loaded with provisions and ammunition for Morillo's army in the plains, had left San Fernando the preceding evening, and had halted about midnight at a small brook, near the spot where the picket was stationed, to which the messenger belonged. He farther reported, that there was a party of about a hundred Spanish infantry escorting the convoy ; and that the picket, on discovering their approach, had fallen back unobserved to within two leagues of San Juan de Pallára, where they were lying in ambush. Rangèl immediately ordered his first troop, consisting of about sixty of his best soldiers, to saddle and follow him.

The forest leading to San Fernando is perfectly clear of underwood ; and offers no farther obstacle to the march of cavalry, than occasionally where the gnarled branch of a congria tree hangs lower than usual, or where the gigantic creeping plants, called *bejúcos*, are entwined from tree to tree, in coils resembling the folds of the böa. Through this wood, the troop took the shortest path to the spot where their comrades were ambushed ; anticipating with exultation, as they followed their chief by single file and in silence, a smart skirmish, and the plunder of an enemy's convoy;—both pleasing objects to a guerilla. They found their companions dismounted, with carbines unslung; their horses being tied in the wood at some distance from the expected scene of action, as a necessary precaution against the fire of the escort which was approaching.

The place which they had selected for their ambush, was in a thick part of the forest, where the road widened into a small glade, about a bow-shot in breadth. Here they conjectured the muleteers of the convoy would halt, for the purpose of tightening girths, and arranging any of the loads that might have been disordered by rubbing against trees in the narrow path. Here also the escort, which preceded and followed the drove of mules, would, doubtless, throng together, and probably become mingled with the baggage animals and their drivers. They would consequently be much more easily surrounded, than when they were divided into the advanced and rear-guards, occupying a considerable space in the line of march.

Rangèl dismounted his troop, and stationed them close to the picket. In a few minutes, the tinkle of the leading mule's bell, and the lively song of the *arriéros*, began to be heard echoing through the wood. The trunks of the old forest trees were amply large enough in girth, to screen every man composing the ambush, as long as he continued to stand behind them ; and, as no suspicion had been entertained at San Fernando, that any party of the insurgents would venture to leave their main body, while Morillo was in the plains, the escort advanced with perfect confidence, and in fancied security. When the advanced-guard reached the farther end of the glade, the officer in command gave the word to halt ; and having seated himself at the foot of a tree, his soldiers followed his example. The mules scattered themselves about the scanty spot of pasture, as they came up in succession ; some laying

down under their burthens, and the rest grazing wherever they found the grass the least rank. The rear-guard followed; and became gradually crowded among the baggage animals, as Rangèl had anticipated, in the disorder usually attending a halt, where no possibility of danger is contemplated.

Rangèl chose this moment for giving the signal to his men, by a few piercing notes on a small bugle which he always carried; and they instantly opened their fire, with deadly effect, on the unprepared enemy. Several of the escort fell, either killed or mortally wounded, at the first volley; and the mules increased the confusion, by galloping about in alarm, some having been struck by chance balls, and all terrified by the noise of the firing, and the exulting shouts of the ambush. The carbineers loaded again immediately, which the shortness of their pieces enabled them readily and quickly to do, notwithstanding their being posted among trees; and before the Spaniards had even time to unbuckle their lock-covers, another volley was poured among them.

The two guards were hastily formed by the sergeants, who took upon them the command, as all the commissioned officers had been killed; and the royalists commenced firing, with the steadiness and celerity that distinguish disciplined soldiers, although the thickness of the smoke, which rolled in white clouds among the trees, prevented them from taking any exact aim. Meanwhile the carbineers, each sheltered by a tree, continued their galling fire, whenever the breeze enabled them to distinguish their enemies, by blowing away the smoke;

until those few of the escort who were as yet unhurt, or only slightly wounded, regained the path, and endeavoured to make good their retreat in the direction of San Fernando.

They had heard the cries of "Viva Rangèl!" which proceeded from the ambush at the commencement of the attack; and were well aware that there were no hopes of quarter. They therefore made no attempt at a parley, but pressed onward with dogged resolution; exchanging shots occasionally, although at a great disadvantage, with their almost invisible enemies in the wood; who hung on their rear with deadly, unrelenting purpose, until the last of the fugitives fell.

As the work of death proceeded, the name of Don Cypriano Rangèl, their chief's father, was repeatedly heard, mingled with cries of "*Mueran los Godos!*" and the last shot was not fired, while a single one, even of the wounded, continued to breathe. They then, by Rangèl's orders, collected the arms and accoutrements of the slain; and fastened them on such mules as remained uninjured. Among these also they distributed the burthens of the dead and dying animals, that had been wounded during the skirmish; and returned to San Juan de Pallára, driving the convoy before them.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RENDEZVOUS—THE MEETING.

——— "In such a night
"Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan wall,
"And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
"Where Cressid lay that night. In such a night
"Did Thisbe fearfully o'er-trip the dew,
"And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
"And ran dismay'd away."

Merchant of Venice.

THE Estéro del Chigüíri, which was the appointed place of meeting for Andres Castro and the fair Llanéra, was considerably nearer the lagoon of Cunavíchi, than it was to the Spanish camp. Juaníta Gomez, therefore, who had it in her power to set out at an earlier hour of the evening than her royalist cousin, arrived at the rendezvous considerably before him. She dismounted, and seated herself under the solitary Moríchi palm-tree, which bends its tapering trunk over the landing place of the pass; and listened attentively for the sound of his

horse's hoofs, which might be heard across the still savanna, long before he could reach the spot.

The night was calm and clear; and the lantern-flies were flitting, like brilliant sparks of fire, among the branches of the aged palm, and through the tall reeds which border the banks of the estéro. Herds of timid chigüíris, from which the ford has taken its name, had been grazing by night along the savanna; and hastily dived among the rushes at the Llanéra's first approach. On finding everything quiet, they again left the water, and were dimly seen by the faint star-light, as they glided silently by in crowded herds, searching for pasture. The frogs too, which had in like manner been interrupted, resumed their mournful chorus, combining every possible variety of tone, from the shrill chirp of the *rana verde*, which inhabits low trees and bushes, and resembles, both in note and colour, the large grass-hopper, to the hoarse bass voice of the bull-frog, startling with its loud and abrupt clamour, from among the water lilies of the marsh.

Dismal as this concert would doubtless appear, in the ears of a stranger to the plains, it was not without its charms for the youthful Llanéra. It reminded her of the peaceful days passed at the hato of Merricúri, before war had even been talked of in the savannas; and she reflected, with the astonishment which the young alone can feel, on the many and serious changes that had since taken place in that home, which she once believed, like the rest of the world at her age, to be incapable of any alteration.

Meanwhile, hour after hour had elapsed; and

Juanita, who was accustomed, after the fashion of the savannas, to measure the flight of time by the stars, saw with uneasiness that midnight had long passed. She feared that some unexpected occurrence had prevented her cousin from keeping the appointment; and began to think of returning towards Cunavichi, in time to join the early milkers; when a sudden rush of the chigüiris to the water, into which they precipitated themselves with headlong haste, announced the approach of some person, whose footsteps had been heard at a distance by those watchful animals. The chorus from the swamps, too, ceased at the same moment; and shortly afterwards Juanita could distinctly hear the galloping of a horse, which appeared to be rapidly approaching the estero.

It was Castro, who, on leaving the royalist camp, had endeavoured to dissipate, by furious riding, all upbraiding thoughts of self reproach, which had intruded themselves on him, when the irrevocable step had been taken In vain did he recall to his mind the wrongs that his country had so long endured, and the insults which had been so recently offered to himself. His reason, indeed, was satisfied; but his pride felt deeply wounded, on reflecting that, be the cause what it might which he had left, he was in truth a deserter. There was, however, now no time for retracting, had such a measure been advisable, or even practicable.

He scarcely paused, on reaching the pass, but dashed at once into the ford, which was up to his horse's breast; and the next minute he stood by the palm tree. He looked anxiously around,

but at first saw nothing of her whom he had expected to find there; for Juanita, uncertain whether it were indeed her cousin, and terrified at the idea of being met by a stranger, at such an hour, and in the midst of so perfect a solitude, had concealed herself behind the tree. With an exclamation of disappointment, he was preparing once more to spur forward his panting charger, when Juanita, who at once recognised his voice, stepped forward and stood before him. He sprung from his steed, and clasped her in his arms, before she had the presence of mind, or perhaps even the wish, to avoid the close embrace. On recollection, however, she hastily disengaged herself, and the cousins gazed on each other fixedly for some moments, in silence.

The features of either had suffered little alteration; but Castro observed, with delight and admiration, the improvement a few short years had wrought in the unformed though interesting playfellow of his chilhood, who now stood before him a blooming brunette of eighteen. Juanita too beheld, with proud affection, the handsome manly countenance and erect form of her cousin, whom she remembered a lively but awkward youth, the foremost in every frolic, yet rather bashful than forward when in the company of strangers. When they at length found their voice, questions, far too numerous for answers, were rapidly exchanged; but Juanita was the first to think of the flight of time, and the danger they both ran of detection, should they not immediately resolve to part. She was however agreeably surprised, at his declaring his intention of accompanying her to the patriot camp.

"Can it be possible, dear Andres? have you indeed resolved on abandoning the fellowship of the oppressors and ravagers of your country? Gladly will Pãez receive you; and my father, who has always deeply lamented your absence from your kinsmen, and your connexion with their enemies, will see in you a substitute for our poor Felípe. Are you aware that we have lost him? He fell fighting bravely against the invaders; among whom, —thank heaven!—you can now no longer be reckoned."

"Too well do I know that he is no more, Juanita! The manner of his death, and the unworthy reception my endeavours to save him met with from Morillo, are not the least among the motives which determined me to leave the Spanish service thus abruptly. On some other opportunity I will tell you all; but let us now hasten to Cunavíchi, that you may regain your mother's hut, if possible, before your absence is discovered. My wish is to present myslf to Pãez, unaccompanied by any one who might be supposed to have in any way influenced my decision. I am well aware, that the step I have taken will cause me to be regarded for a time with suspicion, even by those, to join whom I have sacrificed military rank, and all that is dearest to a soldier. But let them not have it in their power to say, that any motive, more selfish than the desire of revenge for my country's injuries, has had a share in inducing me to desert my colours."

"Give it not so harsh a name, Andres! Think that you are at length making the only reparation in your power to your native land, which has the

first and only unalienable right to claim your services. Call not, therefore, such an act of justice, desertion. But come, my cousin! we have many a long league before us, and not a few deep morasses to pass, before we reach Cunavíchi. We have not visited the banks of that lagoon together, since the panther hunt you may remember, at which our family and the Gamarras joined forces."

She was then lifted to the saddle by her cousin; and led the way across the savanna, closely followed by him. When they reached the wood of Cunavíchi, they separated for a while; Juaníta, to approach the emigrants' huts with as little noise as possible, and Castro, to join the army, which lay bivouacked in the savanna. Before he had proceeded far, he was stopped by the challenge of a patrole, which was going its rounds between the stations of the pickets; and in answer to the—"*Quien vive?*"—he answered, for the first time,—"*America Libre!*"

He was immediately surrounded by the party, expressing great surprise at meeting an officer wearing the Spanish uniform, so near the patriot camp. He explained his situation briefly to the sergeant of the patrole, who detached two lancers to conduct him to the nearest picket. The officer on guard received him with the rude courtesy of a Llanéro; but in answer to his request, that he might be permitted to see Pãez as soon as possible, informed him that it was necessary to wait patiently, until the *Xefe de dia* had visited the pickets.

As he spoke, the trumpets of the Guardia de Honor commenced that lively revelliez, known in

the Venezuelan armies by the name of "La Diana;" and were answered by the bugles of the other corps of cavalry, from different parts of the savanna, each with the peculiar and favourite tune of their regiment. The busy hum of the awakened soldiers was heard from the bivouac, as they started up from the high grass on which they had been stretched, pillowed by their saddles; and as they dispersed in various directions in search of their horses, which were scattered grazing in front of the lines. As the day broke, the lines of cavalry could be dimly seen through the morning mist; and their voices sounded cheerily, as they answered in turn to the roll-call of their respective troops.

The field-officer of the day, meanwhile, attended by a single orderly dragoon, rode round the advanced posts, and collected at each the report of guard. It happened to be Colonel Carvajàl's turn of duty; and when he visited the picket at which Castro was detained, he immediately recognised him, having repeatedly seen him at Merricúri and San Fernando. He welcomed him cordially, congratulating him on his change of service, and more especially on having at once joined the cavalry camp, instead of presenting himself to Bolívar; who might, he observed, have detained him at Los Capuchínos, to assist in drilling his infantry recruits. Having received the report of the officer commanding the picket, Carvajàl desired Castro to follow him, and conducted him towards a clump of trees, at a short distance from the bivouac. There Päez slept, according to custom, in the immediate neighbourhood of his body-guard.

As they passed along the lines of cavalry, which were still halted waiting for the order to be dismissed, Castro could not but remark the surprise which was excited by his appearance. The eyes of all were fixed on him; and several of Carvajàl's most intimate acquaintance questioned him, in an under tone, in hopes of obtaining some explanation; but he rode on without gratifying their curiosity. Pãez was preparing to mount, and inspect the cavalry, accompanied by Zaraza and the aides-de-camp of both generals. He waited for Carvajàl, on seeing him approach with a stranger; and was highly pleased to find that a nephew of Silvestre Gomez, for whom he had a great regard, had joined his army.

"'*Norabuena*, Señor de Castro!" said he; "You could not have chosen a better opportunity for joining us. I propose marching in a few days to attack the Godos; and, as I have little doubt of success, I am persuaded it will be more gratifying to you to have left them before, than after, a defeat. Carvajàl will receive you as an *agregado* to the Guardia de Honor, in which your uncle commands a troop."

He then rode off to the inspection, which formed one of his greatest recreations while in camp; and Carvajàl conducted the young volunteer to his regiment, where he presented him to his new associates, giving him more particularly in charge to his uncle Silvestre, to whose troop he attached him. Gomez received his nephew with the greatest satisfaction; and, after the daily inspection was concluded, proposed to him a ride across the savanna,

previous to joining his family, with whom he usually took breakfast at the ranchos. He enquired, particularly and scrupulously, into the more immediate motives that had induced him to leave the Spanish service; giving as his reason, that he was anxious, for the sake of his kinsman's credit among his present brother officers, that he might be well known to have taken so decided a step on the most mature deliberation, and under the most thorough conviction of its propriety as well as expediency.

"Not that any one can have the slightest grounds for finding fault with your determination, my dear Andres!" said he; "least of all I myself, or any of your relations in Varinas; for your mother was a Llanéra, and you, if not actually born, was bred up in the savannas. I never thoroughly approved of your having entered the Spanish service; and must own, that it would have been your duty to have resigned your commission, immediately on your regiment being ordered against your native land. However, I hope to have it in my power to silence any ill-natured remarks that might be made on the subject; although I think few would venture to hint anything to the disparagement of a nephew of mine, in my presence."

On hearing the circumstances that preceded Castro's leaving the royalist army, he expressed himself perfectly satisfied with his conduct; and embraced his nephew, congratulating himself on having recovered a kinsman, who had been as it were, lost to him so long. He evinced no surprise at his mentioning the manner of his son's death;

for Pãez, having learned it from the Maroméro, had made it known to the whole army, in one of the longest harangues he had been known to utter; in which he called on all the soldiers under his command, but more especially those of the Guardia de Honor, to avenge their comrade, who had been thus slaughtered in cold blood.

"And now, my dear nephew," said Gomez, "as you must naturally be anxious to distinguish yourself in your new service, I can assure you, for your comfort, that you could not have been placed in a better corps in the patriot army for that purpose. For my part, I will take care that you shall not long want opportunities; and we have only to pray heartily that we may be speedily engaged with the enemy; nothing doubting that you will be found as forward in defence of La Patria as you have hitherto, I dare affirm, been against her. Meanwhile, let us ride to the hut, where Paulíta and your cousins are doubtless expecting you; for the news of your joining the army must have already reached them."

The rancho was crowded with Castro's kinsfolk and acquaintance, who had collected to see their countryman; his arrival having created a great sensation of curiosity among the emigrants and troops. On dismounting, he was met by the embraces of a numerous tribe of relations and friends, through whom he could scarcely pass to the hut. Paulíta Gomez welcomed him affectionately, sighing deeply at the same time, as his striking likeness to his cousin Felípe recalled her unfortunate son to her remembrance. His first enquiry

was for Juanita, whom he missed among the cheerful group assembled round him; and he was informed by her mother, that she had not as yet returned from the corràl, where she was employed as usual, together with her cousins, the Gamarras, milking the cows of the family.

She soon after appeared, accompanied by her younger brothers, each of whom brought with him two large calabashes of milk, slung in a net-work of *cabulla*, for the convenience of being carried more easily. Juanita accounted for their having been delayed beyond the usual hour, by acquainting her father, that some wild animal, supposed to be a panther, had broken into the corràl during the night, and killed several of the young calves. This had rendered the cows so wild, that they were obliged to be tied up to the *horcon*[15] before they could be milked. Her reception of her cousin Andres was embarrassed by the recollection of her secret expedition the preceding night; and appeared to her father so cool, that he seriously took her to task for an indifference she was far from feeling.

A substantial Llanéro breakfast was in readiness, consisting of milk, maiz cakes, fish of several different kinds, and fresh turtles' eggs from the Orinoco; beside the usual abundant provision of roast meat, in costillas, rayas, and zezínas. The visitors were numerous, but each had contributed something to the social meal, according to the custom in the plains among neighbours; so that an ample display was made on the smooth turf, which served for a table. So rapidly was Castro plied with

questions on every side, that Silvestre Gomez was at length obliged to interpose his patriarchal authority; and to remind them, that their kinsman was as yet to be considered as a guest, whom the laws of hospitality, as they are observed in the Llanos, do not allow his hosts to disturb while refreshing himself.

Päez, meanwhile, had breakfasted at Doña Rosäura's rancho, where reports were brought him of considerable havoc committed among the emigrants' calves by the panthers, which had not confined their depredations to Paulíta Gomez's corral, but had been doing mischief in several different parts of the ranchería. The loss of a calf was of serious consequence to the emigrants, as it deprived them of the milk of a cow; for the herds, being wild, could only be induced to assemble at the corrals by the presence of their young; and no cow, of the wild savanna breed, will give milk, unless her calf is fastened to her knee.

Päez had consequently determined on a general hunt, for the purpose of clearing the wood of Cunavíchi of as many wild beasts as possible, before the departure of the army from the neighbourhood of the emigrants should leave them unprotected. An excursion of this nature was often necessary in the neighbourhood of the hatos, whenever they began to suffer losses among their cattle by the panthers and jaguars; for those animals, although timid enough when frequently hunted, are rendered so daring, if they are permitted to continue their ravages with impunity, that they soon venture to attack even man. When they have once succeeded

in making him their prey, they become *cebádo*, as the Llanéros term it; and ever after rush fearlessly on any danger, however imminent, to obtain this their favorite food; only losing their propensity to human carnage with their lives.

One of Päez's aides-de-camp came to Paulíta's hut, where the family party was still assembled, with the welcome intelligence of the expedition that had been proposed; and the men, both old and young, started up eagerly, and ran to saddle their horses, with the greatest exultation. Silvestre was as alert on the occasion as the youngest Llanéro, notwithstanding his being long past the prime of life. He provided his nephew with a fresh horse, and a tough lazo of his own twisting; expressing his hope, at the same time, that he had not forgotten how to use it.

"You used formerly," said he, "to throw a lazo almost, if not quite as correctly as I could myself; for I taught you and Felípe together: but I understand that the Spaniards are shamefully ignorant of the science of lazoing. However, it must be allowed that they are not so much to be blamed for that, as they could nowhere have an opportunity of learning, except in the savannas; and few Europeans have ever entered them in peace, since I can remember."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PANTHER HUNT.—THE WILD-BOAR HUNT.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,
But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud,
Because the cry remaineth in one place,
Where fearfully the dogs exclaim aloud:
Finding their enemy to be so curst,
They all strain court'sy who shall cope him first.
Venus and Adonis.

A PANTHER hunt, as managed in the Llanos of Varinas, is a most interesting spectacle; not only to those immediately engaged in it, who undertake the chase for the protection of their herds, and the security of their wives and children while milking, but also to the spectators, who assemble merely through curiosity and to enjoy the sport.

The owners of the hatos used previously to appoint a rendezvous, at which they made it a point of honour to assemble, at the head of as many kinsmen and peons as they could muster, all well mounted on horses broke to the rein.[16] All carried lances, (for fire-arms were not generally permitted

to be kept by creoles before the revolution,) except such as were distinguished for their activity, and dexterity in throwing the lazo, which was made use of for the purpose of entangling the wild animals as they broke cover, and holding them for their companions to kill without danger. It was therefore considered an honourable distinction to be one of the *enlazadóres;* and the post was usually claimed by the principal farmers, their eldest sons, and their mayor-domos. They were careful to bring to the hunt steady horses, accustomed to noise and confusion, as well as to the sight of wild beasts; for the least restiveness or timidity in the horse, at the moment of throwing the lazo, might prove of fatal consequence to his rider, or to the companion whom he had agreed to support.

The enlazadóres divided themselves into pairs, and followed each others motions; their object being to nooze the same animal at one and the same moment: and then by their separating, so as to tighten the lazo, the beast was prevented from flying at either, as it would inevitably do, were only one nooze to take effect. This was a necessary precaution to be taken, especially in the long grass of the savannas, where a horse could not possibly move fast enough to avoid the spring of a panther. It is indeed by no means a contemptible animal in the Llanos of Varínas, where it has been frequently known to drag a yearling colt, or even a two-year-old calf, as the natives assert, over the rails of a corral full six feet in height, and to convey it half a league and more across the plain, to its haunt in the woods.

On the present occasion, nearly a thousand cavalry were assembled, and marshalled, with rather more regularity than was usual at these hunts, under their respective officers; for, as this sport was in reality of serious use to the community, and partook, in fact, of a military nature, Päez had directed all his officers and soldiers to be present, who were not either on guard, or in charge of the madrinas of spare horses for the different regiments. There was indeed little necessity for issuing orders on the subject, for the Llanéros were so far from wishing to evade attending, that those who were prevented, by being on some other duty, saw with feelings of envy the departure of their comrades; and would gladly have left their posts for the purpose of accompanying them, could they have possibly done so, without being guilty of an unpardonable breach of discipline.

The commanders of the different corps, having received their directions from Päez, marched their men off at a brisk trot, and dispersed them, so as to surround, as closely as their numbers would permit, a thick wood, about a league from the emigrants' huts, supposed to harbour the panthers which had done the mischief complained of. Päez himself followed, at the head of the enlazadóres; each of whom (like the valiant Pentapolin, described by the Knight of La Mancha), had his right arm bare to the shoulder, that the wide sleeves of the Llanéro shirts might not interfere with the management of the lazo.

They had with them about twenty of the tall stout limbed tiger dogs of Cumanà, said to be of the breed

of those ferocious blood-hounds, formerly employed by the discoverers of the New World, and by their immediate successors, for the purpose of thinning the superabundant population of the Carribean islands and the adjoining main land; so as to leave room for the introduction of the blessings of civilization, which they were so zealous in bestowing on the survivors, as a compensation for the loss of relations and friends, and of their liberty. The numerous tribes of aboriginal inhabitants were, indeed, so effectually exterminated by this and other methods of wholesale butchery, that the wild beasts of the forest rapidly increased, as the race of native hunters became extinct; and the Spanish settlers found it expedient to preserve with care the breed of the hounds; only varying the objects of sylvan warfare, from the chase of their red brethren, to that of the noxious animals which had taken their place.

Many of these dogs had followed the emigrants, when they left the cattle farms; and terrible, at first, had been the combats among them, until they had become by degrees in some measure accustomed to society. Still their dark blood-shot eyes, broad ears, and hanging lips, which exposed to view a set of strong sharp fangs, as white as ivory, together with their heavy slouching gait, and scowling treacherous looks, forcibly called to remembrance their savage nature, and well authenticated origin. Each of them, singly, was very nearly a match for a jaguar, and could easily master a panther; but they showed none of the animation and excitement so visible in most hounds, when led out for the chase;

following their masters sulkily, and with apparent reluctance

When the party reached the wood, they found that the cavalry had been already distributed along the skirts of the jungle, at a few yards apart from each other, so as to occupy as much space as possible, and to prevent the escape of any wild animal on their side. An open glade, of about half a mile in breadth, had been left unguarded, for the purpose of giving the beasts an opportunity of leaving the wood; and in this spot Päez and Zaráza, with the other enlazadóres, who were covered by a few lancers, posted themselves to intercept the fugitives. The tiger dogs were led round to the opposite side of the wood, where they were turned in, for the purpose of driving out the game. In a short time, their deep hollow bay began to be heard at intervals echoing among the trees; and was soon changed to a continued furious barking, which gradually drew nearer. The hunters having chosen their comrades, separated themselves to a sufficient distance from each other, to allow the lazos to be whirled round their heads without any obstacle meeting them; and looked out attentively, and in profound silence, for the appearance of the first panther. The shouts of the soldiers resounded from different parts of the wood, round which they had been stationed; and some officers, galloping hastily up to Päez, informed him, that two or three wild animals had already shown themselves on the edge of the savanna, but had been prevented from escaping, and driven back into the jungle, by the horsemen.

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following their masters sulkily, and with apparent reluctance

When the party reached the wood, they found that the cavalry had been already distributed along the skirts of the jungle, at a few yards apart from each other, so as to occupy as much space as possible, and to prevent the escape of any wild animal on their side. An open glade, of about half a mile in breadth, had been left unguarded, for the purpose of giving the beasts an opportunity of leaving the wood; and in this spot Päez and Zaráza, with the other enlazadóres, who were covered by a few lancers, posted themselves to intercept the fugitives. The tiger dogs were led round to the opposite side of the wood, where they were turned in, for the purpose of driving out the game. In a short time, their deep hollow bay began to be heard at intervals echoing among the trees; and was soon changed to a continued furious barking, which gradually drew nearer. The hunters having chosen their comrades, separated themselves to a sufficient distance from each other, to allow the lazos to be whirled round their heads without any obstacle meeting them; and looked out attentively, and in profound silence, for the appearance of the first panther. The shouts of the soldiers resounded from different parts of the wood, round which they had been stationed; and some officers, galloping hastily up to Päez, informed him, that two or three wild animals had already shown themselves on the edge of the savanna, but had been prevented from escaping, and driven back into the jungle, by the horsemen.

While they were yet speaking, a large panther darted from among the trees in front of the enlazadóres, with a yell of fury; and bounding over the long grass, attempted to gain the open savanna, by passing between Päez and Carvajàl, his partner in the sport. They both threw their nooses with such precision, that they caught the animal round the loins, while on the bound; and tightening the lazos, the ends of which were tied firmly to the long tails of their horses, they confined it so securely, that it was incapable of doing mischief. The anger and astonishment of the panther, on finding itself ensnared, were excessive. It howled with impotent fury, and foaming at the mouth, endeavoured to bite in sunder the lazos; but it was unable to succeed, in consequence of the toughness of the bull's hide from which the thong was twisted, and the trepidation of dismay felt by the ferocious animal, on finding itself so unexpectedly in the hunter's power.

Päez called to his page Panchíto, who was stationed close behind him; and the boy rode up close to the panther, piercing it repeatedly with his master's lance. At every fresh thrust, the wounded beast seized the lance pole with teeth and claws, so firmly, that it could scarcely be wrested from its gripe; and at length it died without a moan. Panchíto then dismounting, loosened the nooses; and having fastened the tail of the panther to that of his horse, mounted, and dragged it to some distance in the rear.

The other enlazadóres had not been idle: they had already killed four wild beasts of various sizes,

at different parts of the line. Opposite the point where Sylvestre Gomez and his nephew Castro had stationed themselves, a panther and a jaguar broke cover at the very same spot; and pressed so closely together as they rushed along, for the purpose of avoiding the lazos that they saw whirled round on each side,—and of which the wildest animals have been observed to feel an instinctive dread,—that they were both noosed at once, and the lazos became entangled. The rage of the beasts instantly turned against each other; and a desperate fight commenced between them, as they lay rolling together on the grass, unable to extricate themselves. The superior strength, as well as larger fangs and claws of the jaguar, soon gave him a decided advantage, in so close a conflict, over his more active as well as savage antagonist. The panther was already killed, when the attending hunter rode up; and, after a thrust or two with his lance, the jaguar stretched itself at full length, and was to all appearance lifeless.

No sooner had the horseman dismounted, and disentangled both beasts from the nooses, than the jaguar, which had only feigned death, as those animals frequently do on receiving a severe wound, sprang up, and grappled with him in all the fury of despair. The soldier was thrown to the ground, and kept under by the suddenness of the attack; but he retained his presence of mind so far, as to draw the long double-edged cuchillo, (with which every Llanéro is provided), from his sash, and to deal his unexpected assailant a fortunate stab, which reached the heart. The jaguar relaxed its gripe,

and fell by the side of the prostrate lancer; who escaped with his life, but so severely wounded, as to require the assistance of a comrade to support him to the camp.

While the attention of the nearest enlazadóres was engaged by the danger of their companion, two panthers escaped through the line of hunters into the savanna; and were proceeding rapidly by a succession of bounds towards the nearest wood, when Päez and Zaráza spurred in chase of them. As it was at first supposed that they meant to act in concert, by noosing and killing one panther at a time, they were not followed by their assistant hunters, until they were seen to separate and pursue different animals. Their partners then galloped hastily to join them; but before they could reach them, the generals had already thrown their lazos, and were each engaged with a panther, although with far different success. Päez's lazo had fallen over the neck and shoulders of the animal, and had been dexterously tightened at the moment, so as to include its fore legs in the noose, and disable it from any attempts at defence or annoyance. He then dismounted from his well-trained iron-grey, which was so thoroughly acquainted with this manner of hunting, that it kept the line on the stretch, by moving occasionally as the beast floundered in the toils; whilst Päez approached the panther, and killed it by repeated stabs of his cuchillo.

Zaráza's lazo, on the contrary, had not been drawn in with sufficient alertness to entangle the animals legs; so that the noose had caught it

round the loins, leaving to it the full use of its limbs. It therefore turned immediately on its pursuer; and, before he could gain a sufficient distance to be out of its reach, it sprung over the high tufts of savanna grass, and fixed itself firmly, *en croupe*, behind the embarrassed hunter. Fortunately for him, the desperate kicks and plunges of the terrified horse gave the panther no leisure to attack the rider; nevertheless, Zaráza's situation was exceedingly awkward, being so perfectly within its reach, that the least intermission in the horse's *caracols* and *boutades* would have enabled the enraged animal to seize him with its talons. Neither did he dare to throw himself out of the saddle, lest the intruder should also vacate his seat on the croupe. Carvajàl luckily came up in time to relieve the old general. Having thrown the noose with his usual dexterity, he gave his horse the spur, and dragged the panther off with so violent a jerk, that it lay for some minutes stunned, and totally disabled from doing any farther mischief. Päez's page, who had closely followed his general, soon put the beast *hors de combat*.

Zaráza was immediately provided with a fresh horse by one of his aides-de-camp, his own having been severely torn by the panther; and, when his brother hunters were satisfied that he had received no personal injury, they were unsparing in their jokes on the subject of his narrow escape. The veteran, galled by the merriment and pretended pity of his younger associates, resolved to take the usual course under such circumstances; namely, that of signalising himself by some daring exploit,

[illegible]

They gave their horses to their attendants, and having provided themselves with short stout lances, as more easily manageable among the trees, they followed Tarleton, who had already disappeared. The underwood was by no means so thick, as to prevent their looking round them; for the only low branches to be found, were such as occasionally sprung from the roots of fallen trees. They were guided in their search for the old general, by the [illegible] of the nearest group of dogs; and

were soon enabled to account for the hounds not having rushed in at once on the object of their pursuit.

A female panther, with two nearly full-grown cubs, had ensconced herself in the centre of a thick clump of brush-wood; where two decayed trees lay across each other on the ground, and having been broken by the fall, had formed an almost impregnable shelter, with four large logs of their shattered trunks. These were matted together, in a sort of strong trellice-work, by the creeping bejúcos of the forest; and only one narrow entrance to this natural den could be discovered. At this the enraged beast appeared, in readiness to meet the first intruder; backed by her twin cubs, whose presence redoubled her fury and desperation, and who were, themselves, "no babes to strive withal."

Zaráza had advanced thus far; but appeared in some measure uncertain how to proceed. Although the hounds were animated, almost to madness, by the resistance they had already encountered,—for several of them were bleeding profusely from deep lacerations, with which the angry mother had chastised the most forward of her assailants,—and by the presence and cheering shouts of the hunters, they could not be urged, by any encouragement or chiding whatever, to venture into the narrow mouth of the den.

Andres Castro, who was the youngest of the venturous party, seized one of the long bejúcos which hung down from a neighbouring tree; and swung himself lightly, by its assistance, to the top of the harbour. Then, steadying himself with one

hand, he employed his lance with the other so effectually, that the yells of the young panthers were distinctly heard, even above the uproar of the hounds and hunters. The mother instantly turned, with the intention of assisting, or revenging her cubs; the foremost dog eagerly seized the opportunity, to rush into the deserted entrance, followed by as many as could find room; and speedily tore in pieces the savage family.

The party next sought out the remaining, and, as it appeared from their barking, most numerous pack of dogs. They found them assembled round a Caujera tree, near which there was no brushwood whatever. On the lower branches, just out of the hound's reach, were seated a male and female jaguar, which, on finding themselves surrounded, had sought this place of refuge, where they might have continued in safety, had it not been for the arrival of their more formidable enemies, the hunters. Here the party was once more at a stand, for it was obviously too imprudent a risk to attempt approaching them near enough to use the lance; as the fierce animals would inevitably, on being wounded, have sprung down upon their assailants, and probably injured them severely before they could be disabled.

Castro again thought of an expedient, which proved successful, and obtained for him Päez's approbation, to his uncle's great delight. He left the wood for a few moments, and returned with two lazos, which he had procured from his friends in the savanna. Slinging these over his shoulders, he ascended the next tree to that in which the ja-

guars were seated; and having gained the branches immediately over them, he noosed them with facility, one after the other. He then threw down the ends of the lazos to his uncle and Carvajàl, passing the lines over separate forked branches. The hunters below dragged the jaguars, notwithstanding an obstinate resistance, from the position they had chosen; and having lanced them, let them fall among the dogs, who soon put an end to their struggles. They then left the thicket, and regained their horses; well satisfied with having broken up a horde, which threatened to become so formidable to their emigrant friends. They found that, including those killed in the wood, which obtained for Castro the chief share of praise, five jaguars and eight panthers were the trophies of the chase.

As the day was not yet far advanced, Päez selected a party of officers and their attendants, to accompany him to a savanna a few leagues off; which, from its producing abundance of sweet *junco* roots, was generally frequented by herds of javalies, that harboured in the neighbouring woods. At the same time, he ordered the troops, as their services were no longer required, to be marched back to the camp ground, where the daily allowance of bullocks had been driven, to be slaughtered for their rations.

When the hunters reached the appointed savanna, they found a large drove of the bristly game, feeding in the middle of a meadow. On being disturbed by the approach of the horsemen, the sows retreated rapidly, with their sounders of pigs, towards the nearest covert; while the male javalies,

who found themselves closely pursued, rushed headlong on the lances, which proved insufficient to repel their furious charge. The tough lance-poles bent, like pliant canes, against their brawny shoulders and chines; and the more brittle staves were splintered to the very grasp. The coolest and most dexterous management of the reins was required, in aid of the horses' activity, to avoid the deadly tusks, which were aimed at their flanks; for the boar of the Llanos, although apparently heavy, is possessed of considerable agility, besides being tall enough to rip up a horse of any height.

While this animating exercise engaged the attention of Päez, and his immediate followers, Zaraza, whose age and numerous wounds had impaired his strength, and in a great degree damped his ardour for unprofitable exertion and risks, had joined those veteran hunters, who agreed with him in opinion, that a fat young javali was better worth carrying back to the camp, than the empty honour gained by breaking a lance against an old boar. With these he had chased the runaways of the herd, lancing as many pigs as he and his companions could come up with, and leaving them to be picked up when the sport should be over.

The hunters at length permitted their sturdy antagonists to retire, without any further molestation, for the sake of sparing their horses so much unnecessary fatigue. When they had collected their game, and were preparing to return, they missed the old general; and, while looking round for him, saw his horse gallop out of the wood

'er, his bridle broken, and his flank

slightly wounded and marked with foam from a boar's tusks.

"Santa Maria ý Jose!" exclaimed Päez; "I fear Tahita Cordillera has met with another and a worse accident. I would not,—for my best horse,[17]—that anything serious should befal him. Carvajàl! Gomez! *al monte, muchachos!*"

He immediately dismounted, and was followed into the wood by those he named, and by several others, whose anxiety for the veteran's safety would not permit them to rest. They soon discovered the object of their search and apprehension. He had followed a drove of young javalies into the forest, where he had dismounted, and tied his horse's bridle to a tree, while he proceeded on foot among the bushes. He had not gone far, before he came suddenly on an exceedingly large old boar, which had instantly resented the intrusion, and driven him to take shelter on the lower branches of a guava tree, that fortunately stood near. The javall had slightly gored his horse, which had escaped into the savanna, and was the means of acquainting his companions with his situation. He might, otherwise, have been detained there, until the boar had thought proper to retire; for it had lain down at the foot of the tree; and the old general was restrained by shame, and the recollection of his recent discomfiture with the panther, from calling for assistance.

When Zaraza's deliverers approached, the animal rushed furiously at them; but, as they were on their guard, they avoided its headlong onset, by springing to one side; and disabled it by ham-

stringing it, as it passed, with their lances; after which they dispatched it at their leisure. Zaraza, on descending from the tree, walked in silence to his horse, completely crest-fallen by the thoughts of his two ludicrous, although really dangerous, misadventures. The hunters then agreed to conclude their sports for the day; and turned their horses in the direction of Cunavichi.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FEAST.—NATIONAL SONGS.

Sir Toby. "But, shall we make the welkin dance, indeed? Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch, that will draw three souls out of one weaver? Shall we do that?"
Twelfth Night.

BEFORE Päez had reached the camp, an orderly sergeant met him, with the agreeable news of a drove of loaded mules having been sent in, from Rangèl's party on the other side of the Aräuco. He spurred forward on receiving this intelligence; and found a subaltern in command of the escort just arrived, who presented him with a letter from the colonel of the guerilla, and a packet of despatches that had been found on one of the Spanish officers, who had fallen in the affair with the ambush at San Juan de Pallára. The only important communication contained in these, was from the vice-roy at Bogotà to Morillo, in which Zamano directed the latter to detach General Calzada into New Grenada,

with a division of the royalist army; urging, as a motive for promptitude, the threatening position of the insurgent forces under Santandèr, who had advanced beyond Cazanares, and the seditious meetings and proclamations of the disaffected inhabitants of Tunja, Zocorro, and other provinces of the Entre-Andes.

This news only confirmed the intelligence, of which Bolívar was already in possession; but it proved that the royalists in Venezuela were likewise apprised of it; and Pãez exulted in the anticipation of Morillo's being speedily compelled to retire from the savannas, or of Santandèr's revolutionising Cundinamarca without opposition.

"And yet," said Pãez, "I could wish this packet were in Morillo's hands; for it would hurry the Godo's movements. *Oyga, nino Panchito?* Hast thou sense enough, (daring I well know thou hast,) to approach a Spanish picket, sufficiently near to throw this folded paper in their way, without risking thyself more than is absolutely necessary to ensure success?

"*Como no, mi Xefe?* Let me but choose a good horse from the herd; give me the packet; and I will answer for its safe delivery."

"But how dost thou propose to manage the business, *amiguito?* If the Godos take thee in the attempt;—Abur!—They will surely hang thee for a spy, little as thou art."

"*Dexad me, no mas!* I will ride by night into their drove of spare horses, and fasten the packet to the mane or tail of one of the tamest among them."

"*Viva Dios!* but thy contrivance is superior.

About it then instantly; and take any horse in the madrina;—always excepting my *rucio ravon.*"

This commission was exactly suited to the active and venturous spirit of the boy, who undertook it with the same fearless glee, that would have animated an European child of his age, when about to set out on a bird-nesting expedition. Meanwhile, Pãez examined the mules' loads that had just arrived. He despatched the ammunition, under an escort, to Playa Arenósa on the banks of the Orinoco, that it might be sent across to Bolívar's camp, at Los Capuchínos; and served out the clothing among such of the cavalry as stood most in need of it. There were two mules loaded with small barrels of wine, destined probably for the Spanish generals and their staff: these Pãez ordered to be reserved for the use of the emigrant families. The skins of aguardiente, which were numerous, he distributed among the troops, who accordingly prepared to hold a *festéjo*, as usual on receiving such glorious wind-falls.

The Guardia de Honor assembled, as on a former occasion in the same camp, in a jovial circle round their Chief. They were well aware, that they were once more on the point of taking the field under his command; and the thoughts of the approaching conflict, far from damping their merriment, gave additional zest to the entertainment. After Pãez had given the usual *brindis*, of—"Simòn Bolívar ý Venezuela Libre!" the following verses were sung in praise of the Libertadòr; who was more popular in the army of the Llanos, and particularly among the men of La Guardia, than in any other part of the republic.

" Gloria ! Gloria ! Bolívar ;
" Gloria, Libertador !
" De Cevallos espanto,
" De Aräuri vencedor.

" A tu patria triunfante
" Tres veces has entrado ;
" Y treinta derrotado
" Al barbaro Espanol.

" El pavellon de Espana
" Pues á tus pies lo visteis,
" Quando en el campo hicisteis
" Fixar el Tricolor.

" Grenada y Venezuela
" Juraron bella union ;
" Rompieron las cadenas
" De la dura opresion.

" Gloria ! Gloria ! Bolívar ;
" Gloria, Libertador !
" De Cevallos espanto,
" De Aräuri vencedor."

After a pause, Zaraza proposed a calabash to the health of " *Mi General Päez, con su Guardia de Honor !*" It was received with enthusiasm ; and the lancers immediately replied to it with the song of the Guard, in full chorus.

[19] " El que quiera ser libre, que aprenda
" Que en la Guardia tenemos por ley,
" Abborrecer a todo tyráno,
" Y detestar al nombre del rey.
" Avanzad, avanzad, O Guerréros !
" Al feroz Espanol atacad ;
" Y, á pesar de sus vanos esfuerzos,—
" Libertàd ! Libertàd ! Libertàd !

"Que esperamos de un rey que ha violádo
"Las contratas que hizo a su nacìòn ?
"Esperemos los males mas gráves ;
"Ygualmente nuestra destrucciòn.
"Avanzad, avanzad, O Guerréros !
"Al feroz Espanol atacàd ;
"Y, á pesar de sus vanos esfuerzos,—
"Libertàd ! Libertàd ! Libertàd !"

A message shortly after arrived from Doña Rosãura, inviting Päez and his officers to a *fandango*, which the emigrants had prepared near their huts, for the purpose of taking leave of their protectors. An extensive spot of ground had been cleared, in an oblong form, among the Congria trees, by lopping the lower branches to about twenty feet from the ground; and this space had been railed in with bambu poles, extending from trunk to trunk. A close neat screen, of the bright yellow Culegüi cane, completely fenced in this sylvan ball-room; the floor of which was strewed with dry white sand, collected from the banks of the neighbouring lagoon. Lamps, formed of the pink-coloured caracòl shells found in the savanna, were ranged at short intervals along the screen; and, being fastened round hoops of pliant bejúco, were suspended, in lieu of chandeliers, from the branches extending across the salon. There was no want of music; for guitars and vihuelas were as common among the emigrants as in the army. Besides these, two harps, which had been brought by some musicians, who had apparently found more leisure than their neighbours at the time of leaving their homes, added their enlivening strains.

After some hours' constant exercise, in dancing *El Bambúco*, *La Solita*, and *La Chapetóna*, (for by means of the custom which directs the dancers to be repeatedly relieved by fresh sets, they are enabled to continue their amusement, for any length of time, without intermission,) a collation was introduced, which, if not elegant, had at least the recommendation of being substantial. As this was considered a farewell entertainment, and would in all probability be the last at which they might all assemble, it was unanimously agreed to prolong it until a late hour. Singing being proposed, the Llanéras, many of whom had already listened (*de tapaditas*) to the songs at the neighbouring camp, volunteered in turn their tribute of praise to the Libertador.

[20] " Mi General Bolívar ! por Dios te pido,
" Que de tus Oficiales me deis marído ;—
" Vaya ! Vaya ! Vaya ! me deis marído.
" Mi General Bolívar tiene en la boca
" Un clavel encarnádo que me provóca ;—
" Vaya ! Vaya ! Vaya ! que me provoca.

" Mi General Bolívar tiene un cavallo
" Que entre la peléa parece un rayo ;—
" Vaya ! Vaya ! Vaya ! parece un rayo.
" Mi General Bolívar tiene en la espáda
" Un refran engravado ;—Muera la Espana !—
" Vaya ! Vaya ! Vaya ! Muera la Espana !

" Con las balas que tiran los Chapetónes
" Se peynan las Patriotas sus canelónes ;—
" Vaya ! Vaya ! Vaya ! sus canelónes ;—
" A las armas van nuestros Libertadóres ;
" El cielo les conserve á sus amóres !—
" Vaya ! Vaya ! Vaya ! á sus amóres !"

While Doña Rosaura, accompanied by some of her favorite companions, was singing this *despedida*, many of the youthful Llanéros

" in cool recess apart
" Courted the ladies of their heart
" Nor courted them in vain:
" For flinty were her heart could view
" To battle march a lover true,
" Could hear perchance his last adieu,
" Nor own her share of pain."

" *Oygan, cavalléros !*" said Pãez; " it is your turn to reply. Has our new camarada Castro brought us nothing from Spain, or at least from Caraccas ? Let us hear something, amigo Andres, even though it should be a royalist song ; for you have scarcely been with us long enough, as yet, to learn any on our side of the question."

" Willingly, mi Xefe ! mine shall be a neutral song ; such as might suit either army on the eve of a march."

[21] "Las caxas ý cornetas mi anuncian el marchar,
" Y de mi amada duena me voy a separar ;
" Yo viviré penando, pues ya tu amor perdi,
" Y tu, quizas, bien mio ! te olvidaras de mi.

" En el segundo toque empiezo á suspirar.
" A ver que sin recurso te tengo que dexar ;
" Ascensos ni victorias podran intereser,
" Si de mi amada duena la vista he de perder.

" Ya salen las banderas, las que hé de seguir,
" Y de ella a quien adoro me voy a dispedir ;
" Yo viviré penando, pues ya tu amor perdi,
" Y tu, quizas, bien mio ! te olvidaras de mi."

The singing of the two contending parties ceased by mutual consent; and all returned to the more enlivening amusement of the dance, which was prolonged until the bugles in the camp rang out the *Diana*. The Llanéros then reluctantly bid farewell to their emigrant relations and friends; and hastened to the bivouac, each to join his respective troop. Little preparation was necessary to enable an army, so unincumbered with baggage as that of the Llanos, to take the field; so that, immediately after roll-call, the Guardia de Honor filed off through the intricate passes of the marshes, followed by the other corps in their established order of march, and soon gained the open savanna.

A short distance in advance, rode Páez and Zaraza, surrounded by their staff, and were by degrees joined by most of the Llanéro officers, who availed themselves of their intimacy with their chief to leave the line of march, attracted by the frequent bursts of laughter proceeding from his immediate attendants. Such merriment was so usual at the head of Páez's guard, especially when marching against the enemy, that Bolívar himself, if present with the army, never failed to pause there for an hour or so on his way to the front, for the purpose of enjoying the unrestrained, but good-humoured sallies of the Llanéros and their leader.

On the present occasion, their risibility was excited by the uncouth appearance, and simplicity of manners, of an attendant, whom Páez had selected from the guard as his lance-bearer in the absence of Panchíto, and who was as striking and

ludicrous a contrast to the lad, as could have well been chosen. Perrucho Godomar was an unusually tall, hard-featured zambo; who would indeed have been gigantic, had the size of his body borne any proportion to the extravagant length of his limbs. Notwithstanding so formidable an exterior, so far from partaking of the ferocity and savage disposition, by which the zambo race is particularly distinguished from all other men of colour, he was remarkable for good temper and cheerfulness. He was by turns the favorite and the butt of the Guardia, for which unenvied post he was eminently well qualified, by his singleness of apprehension and eccentricity of character; as he was usually unconscious of his being the subject of his comrades' mirth; or, when he could not avoid perceiving it, his awkward attempts at jocularity and repartee were irresistibly comic. Under great apparent stolidity, Perrucho in reality concealed much shrewd intelligence, and had been promoted from the ranks to the station of Alférez, as a reward for many instances of unshrinking intrepidity in the field: in particular, for the cool gallantry with which he had twice saved his chief's life, when surrounded by enemies, into the midst of whom he had cut his way, and disabled from defence, by attacks of those fits to which Páez was so subject.

Perrucho had been a mayor-domo on a cattle-farm, near the town of Sombrero, previous to the revolution. His parents were slaves, but he himself had been freed, as a reward for his fidelity to his master, and for his honesty in all transactions connected with the purchase and sale of cattle, both

which were confided exclusively to his management; the farms in the immediate vicinity of the hilly country being always stocked with bullocks brought from the hatos in the savannas, which, when fattened, were driven up to Caraccas and the seaports for sale.

Carvajàl had known him, while engaged in this peaceful occupation, and had heard many instances of his intrepidity, and scrupulous attention to his master's interest; but he now affected to doubt his having been ever intrusted with a herd of cattle, and engaged him, in defence of his abilities as a drover, to entertain the generals with an anecdote of his exploits in that character.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MAYOR-DOMO'S TALE.

Outlaw.—" Stand, Sir! and throw us that you have about you;
" If not, we'll make you sit, and rifle you."
Speed.—" Sir, we are undone! these are the villains
" That all the travellers do fear so much."

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

" A FEW years before the breaking out of the disturbances, which have driven many a mayor-domo, besides myself, to exchange the *picána*[22] for the lance, I used regularly for many years to drive three large herds of bullocks, in the course of each summer, from the Llanos to my patron's farm at Sombrero, and again from thence to the upper country of Caraccas. I was also occasionally sent with a few bulls, when they happened to be bespoke for the fights, at the capital or elsewhere; so that in course of time, by constant journeying up and down the country, I became well known in every

village between Sombréro and Cachiza. I also knew most of the picarons between the low country and Caraccas; and was so much respected by them, that, although I frequently fell in with them, they never offered me the least interruption. This was a fortunate circumstance for my *patròn;* for the roads used to be notoriously dangerous for those who travelled with a charge of money, as was always my case, when returning after having sold the bullocks.

"I happened also to be compadre with the famous *salteadòr*, Bicentíco Hurtado, who commanded a troop for many years in the palm forest of Ortiz; and I used generally to pass a merry night with him and his men, on my way upwards with the cattle; I being the only mayor-domo, among the many who frequented that road, that dared pasture a drove of bullocks in the neighbourhood of his haunts. On my return, indeed, I never cared to thrust myself into his company, if I could by any means avoid it; for although he himself, as being my compadre, would have scorned to touch a real of the money under my charge, yet his mozos, perhaps, might not have been so scrupulous.

"One year, (it was just before the feast of Pascua Florida, and every principal town in Venezuela was preparing a *toréo* on the occasion,) I had a drove of twenty prime bulls for the Villa de Parrapurra; and, as they were unusually wild, and my patròn had given me particular charge on no account to disappoint the alcalde of that place, who had paid earnest for them more than a month beforehand, I took the precaution of turning them every night into a secure corral, near some village, from whence

there was no danger of losing them. I had driven them in safety, by this means, as far as the town of Ortiz, and had only a short stage of five leagues before me, when, as my ill luck would have it, *El Chambéco*,[23] who possesses all boys without exception, (and I think in a more especial manner those of Ortiz,) prompted all the young idlers of the place to assemble round the corral in search of mischief, while I and the peons under my orders were sleeping the siesta after our harassing march. As was naturally to be expected, the boys provoked the bulls, which would otherwise have lain down quietly in the pen, so perseveringly and successfully, that one of them half leaped, half burst his way, over the railings, and escaped into the forest, followed by the entire drove.

"I was roused from a sound sleep, by the uproar in the street; and, on reaching the door of the house in which I lodged, was just in time to see my bulls charging through the Plaza, precisely at the moment when it was most crowded by the inhabitants returning from church, after the Oracion del Rosario. The wild animals were fortunately so intent on making their escape, that they did little or no mischief; merely tossing out of their way those who were so unlucky as to be nearest; bu not stopping to gore any one. I mounted immediately, and having galloped after them, ascertained that they had turned to the right of the Cerrito, and taken the direct road for the Palmar.

"I was well aware that, unless they were soon headed, and surrounded by horsemen acquainted with the avenues of the forest, they would find

their way into the savannas about Rincon de Los Toros, and be irrecoverably lost. My peons knew nothing of the country; besides, their horses were completely knocked up for that day, and incapable of the necessary exertion. I therefore applied to the alcalde of Ortiz, to assist me with a party of his people; urging that, as the boys of his town had done the mischief, it was incumbent on him to repair it; but he answered me, that truly he had an old quarrel with the Alcalde of Parraparra, about the law-suit concerning the repairs of the road between the two towns; and assured me that, if it had been for any other bulls, he would have willingly gone out with me himself. I knew well that his real motive for refusing me was, that he was afraid to trust himself or his peons in the palm forest, on account of Bicentíco Hurtádo and his party, whom the people of Ortiz had mortally offended, by refusing them permission to enter the town peaceable on the festival of Pascua de la Natividad, as they had sent to request, for the purpose of confessing and hearing mass.

"I determined, in this extremity, to seek for my compadre himself, and ask his help to recover the cattle. As it was already dusk, I knew that I should find either him or some of his people near the highway; and accordingly, I had not gone far, before I was halted by two of his scouts, who were on the look-out for travellers at the edge of the forest. On my making myself known to them, and explaining the business that had brought me, one of them conducted me to Hurtádo, who was lying in ambush at no great distance, with the remainder of his

troop. My compadre, on learning the distress I was in, immediately ordered all the scouts to be called in; and having ordered a fresh horse to be saddled for my use, set out at our head in chase of the bulls.

"As Bicentico was intimately acquainted with every quebráda and outlet of the forest, he detached small parties in different directions, so skilfully, as to head the wild cattle; and shortly after day-break, we had the whole drove safe in his own corral, at the principal rendezvous in the centre of the Palmar. We found it necessary to confine the bulls here, the whole of that day and the following night, that they might recover by degrees from their *alboróto*, before it would be prudent to drive them along the public road. My compadre did not appear to like the idea of letting my peons know where the secret place of concealment was situated; I therefore sent them a message by one of the gang, who disguised himself as a payzano, desiring them to meet me early the following morning, on the road between Ortiz and Parraparra, at a particular spot which I mentioned.

"Hurtádo entertained me sumptuously at his rancho, on venison and plantains; for his men killed a couple of deer while collecting the cattle, and the country people round the forest used to supply him regularly with vegetables and fruit, in return for his protection. After leaving the bulls at Parraparra, I was bound for Caraccas, for the purpose of making some purchases for my master, as well as attending his sister, Doña Teresa, and his brother-in-law, Don Francisco Cardenas, who

were expected on a visit to Sombrérо for the Easter holidays. I therefore enquired of my compadre, whether there was anything he or his people wished me to bring them from the capital, in return for their kindness in assisting me so readily. They happened, at the time, to be in great want of tobacco and aguardiente; for they had been deprived of their usual supplies, in consequence of their quarrel with the townsmen of Ortiz, and were reduced to depend on fortune, for sending a chance cargo occasionally by that road. It was agreed between us, that I should take with me from the forest two baggage-mules, each of which I was to load with two goat-skins of aguardiente and a small bale of tobacco, that I was to purchase as if for my master's use. I would willingly have paid for those articles myself; but Hartádo insisted on giving me the necessary money out of the common stock of the troop.

"The next morning, the bulls being tolerably quiet, my compadre and his men assisted me to drive them to the Tambo del Espinàl, which was the place where I had appointed my peons to wait for me; and we parted with mutual good wishes and civilities. I delivered the drove in safety to the alcalde of Parraparra, who paid me the remainder of the money due, besides *albricias* to myself, for having brought the beasts so fresh and in such good condition. I then selected two peons, to accompany me and take care of Bicentico's mules; sending the other mozos back to the farm, before I set out for the capital.

"When I arrived at Caraccas, I found Don

Francisco and his lady ready for the journey; and having concluded my purchases, not forgetting my compadre's commission, we left the city by the Vitoria road. We were seven in number, including two Carracqueño muleteers; one of whom attended the lady and gentleman who rode in front, and the other, who had in his charge the macho with their trunks, joined me and my peons. We slept at Ortiz the third night after leaving the capital; and early the next morning, while we were loading the mules to continue our journey, Don Francisco and his lady set out, attended by their peon, with the intention of reaching Sombréro by my master's usual dinner hour.

"I had earnestly advised them, previous to our setting out from Caraccas, to keep company with the baggage animals, that they might secure the assistance of myself, and the three peons who were with me, in case of being attacked on the road by salteadores. Don Francisco, however, who, as well as his attendant, was armed with a carbine, treated my advice with ridicule, and was even inclined to resent it, as an imputation on his courage. I therefore said no more on the subject, contenting myself with hurrying on the mules, more than I should otherwise have done, so as to keep as close as possible to the travellers, for the sake of my master's sister. Nevertheless, as they had the start of me this last morning, the very accident befel them, against which I had so seriously warned them.

"Shortly after leaving the town, I heard three or four shots fired; and when I reached the nar-

row, pass between the Cerrito and the forest, I saw a mule, which I recognised as Don Francisco's, lying wounded across the path. One of Hurtádo's lads was stripping off the bridle and saddle; and on seeing me, he welcomed me from Caraccas, hoping I had brought with me the tobacco and spirits, as I had promised. I answered by pointing to the mules; and well knowing that something serious had happened, asked to see my compadre Bicentíco. The salteador informed me, that he had gone to the rendezvous, with three prisoners whom he had just taken, who had been foolish enough to refuse compliance with his demand of tribute. He said that, as soon as he had concealed the wounded mule, so that no alarm might be spread, he would accompany me to the *rancheria*; but that my companions must wait for me near the road. I desired my peons to assist him in rolling the disabled mule into the gorge of a ravine hard by, and to remain where they were until I should return: then, separating the two mules belonging to Hurtádo from the other baggage animals, I proceeded towards the rendezvous with my guide.

"On our way thither he informed me that, as the troop was lying in ambush as usual that morning, they had seen the travellers approaching; and Bicentico had advanced to meet them, accompanied only by his lieutenant, out of tenderness for the lady, whom they did not wish to alarm by a display of more force than was absolutely necessary. They warned Don Francisco that resistance was in vain, and desired him to surrender his purse peaceably;

but they were answered by two shots, from him and his attendant, which slightly wounded both Hurtado and the second in command. On seeing this, the party concealed in the wood rushed out, and fired several carbines at the travellers, before their chief could pacify them. They fortunately did no farther mischief, than slightly grazing the lady's forehead, and mortally wounding Don Francisco's mule, as I had already seen.

"In answer to the enquiries I made, as to the mode in which he supposed the prisoners would be disposed of, he said that the lady might probably be ransomed, provided she had any friends in the neighbourhood; especially as Bicentico was violently enraged at her having been wounded, and would have cut the man down who fired the shot, had he been able to discover him. He thought it more than probable than Don Francisco would be put to death; for the troop were unanimously calling for vengeance on him when they rode away; but that, as for the peon, he would escape in all likelihood, in consideration of having acted under his master's orders.

"When we reached the ranchos, I was received with a shout of welcome by the troop of salteadores, who were dismounted, and standing in a circle at their horses' heads, apparently in deep consultation. Don Francisco and the peon, both blindfolded, were tied to separate trees; and, as saw Doña Teresa's mule standing at the door of the women's rancho, I concluded she was tolerably safe with them. Having delivered the mules, which the bandidos soon unloaded, depositing the

cargoes in Bicentico's hut, I requested permission to speak a few words in private to my compadre. I informed him, in the first place, that the lady was my master's sister, and, consequently, as much entitled to my services and attention, as my patrón himself; and I charged him, as a compadre, to protect both her and her husband, whom I cared but little for, by the way, except on her account.

Bicentico assured me that the lady should be safe; and declared that, if it only depended on him, he would demand no ransom for her, as he was beyond measure vexed at her having received a hurt in the skirmish; but that her husband had brought it on entirely by his own obstinacy. As for Don Francisco, he could not be so sure of saving him; for the lads of the gang, and especially the lieutenant who had been wounded by him, were clamorous for his death. Nevertheless, as I appeared so earnestly to wish it, he agreed to try whether he could prevail on the troop to be content with a smart ransom; assuring me that he would do his utmost to oblige me, although he could not help observing, that the cavallero certainly deserved any treatment, however severe, he might meet with.

"He then turned to his companions, and informed them that, as his compadre Perrucho was particularly interested in the safety of the lady and her husband, he desired that the latter might be admitted to ransom as well as his wife. This declaration produced a violent clamour, in which the second in command, and his partizans, were by far the most noisy and turbulent of the whole gang,

and insisted loudly on blood atoning for blood. At last the lieutenant, whose natural ferocity had been exasperated by his wound, openly accused my compadre Bicentico of receiving bribes for sparing the life of his prisoners, thereby defrauding the common stock, as well as depriving his comrades of their just revenge. He even went so far as to declare, that he thought himself quite as well entitled to command as any one in the troop; and proposed that it should be put to the vote, whether Hurtádo or himself should be the *Xefe del Partido*.

"Bicentico answered by instantly unsheathing his sabre, and calling on the lieutenant to defend himself, and prove whether he were so worthy of being chief as he boasted. The salteadores immediately formed a ring round the rivals, who attacked each other with the mutual animosity which was inspired, on one side, by offended authority, and the desire of chastising insubordination, and on the other, by deadly rancour, and the ambition of obtaining command of the troop. Hurtádo's activity, and superior skill in the use of his weapon, soon decided the combat. His mutinous antagonist retired discomfited, after receiving a severe cut across the face in the first onset, and, shortly after, being disarmed in an attempt to parry. There is nothing equal to personal prowess, for keeping in order either a Guerilla or a Tropa de Bandidos, which (no offence to mi General *Zaraza*,) bear a striking resemblance to each other in many points. The whole troop now joined in shouts of,—'*Viva nuestro Xefe Bicentico!*' and the

whole affair was referred by common consent to his decision.

"My compadre proposed to them to accept five hundred dollars as a ransom for the two principal prisoners; and it was agreed to, on my promising to be personally responsible for the punctual payment of this sum. They moreover released the peon, who was half dead with fear, at my intercession, and *de llapa*, as they termed it: they even had the consideration to lend me a mule for Don Francisco's use, which I promised to restore when I should return with the ransom.

Matters being thus amicably settled, to the satisfaction of every one but the mutinous lieutenant, I was the first to announce to Doña Teresa her being at liberty to depart. This assurance of safety relieved her from an agony of consternation, by which she had been overwhelmed since the moment of her capture. It would be superfluous to describe the joy and gratitude of Don Francisco, on finding himself and his lady once more free, and on the road to Sombréro. To say the truth, I was to the full as much astonished as they were, at the happy termination of this unpleasant event; for I had not expected to succeed so easily, nor indeed should I, had it not been for the interference of my compadre, to whom I soon afterwards paid the ransom, as I had promised, with a handsome present from Don Francisco, over and above the bargain.

"On my return to the farm, my patron immediately made me free, and gave me a *conúco* of my own; nevertheless, I preferred remaining in

his service, and continued to be his mayor-domo until the descent of Bovez on Sombréro, when my master and his whole family were slaughtered, and the farm-house burned. I then threw aside the drovers *picána*, as I said before, and took the lance in one of Zedeño's Guerillas. When that was cut to pieces and dispersed at Los Urreales, I joined my present Xefe, Don Jose Antonio."

"*Mil gracias, amigo Perrucho!*" said Päez; "You have now the privilege of calling on any one you see round me, to follow your example."

"Mi General Zaraza," replied Godomar, "has been one of the most attentive listeners; I am therefore emboldened to apply to him."

The old general readily agreed to take his turn; and related the following anecdote of the Indians of Cumaná.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GUERILLA CHIEF'S TALE.

Davy. "I grant your Worship, that he is a knave; but the knave is mine honest friend, Sir."

King Henry IV.

"DURING the peaceful times that we formerly enjoyed in Venezuela, previous to the commencement of the revolution, when my sole employment was the cultivation of cacáo and sugar-cane on the estate at Peñuelas, which our friend Carvajàl here well remembers, one of the small wandering tribes of Cumanà Indians was regularly in the habit of passing the winter months among the outhouses on my plantation, and always returning to the woods, near the Orinoco, as soon as the periodical rains had ceased. As this tribe was remarkably well behaved, and strictly honest, as far as I could learn, (at least where my property was concerned,) I made no objection to their sheltering themselves for two or three months in the year, and never

found cause to repent shewing them this unusual indulgence.

"Their cazique, a tall old Indian, commonly known by the name of Neculpichüi *el tuerto*, from having lost an eye, kept them under the strictest subordination; and, as he had been known more than once to exercise his hereditary power of life and death in his tribe, all his people paid him implicit obedience. He used to make them extremely serviceable to me, at times, in such ways as did not interfere with their independent wandering habits; for, as to actual work, a true Indian, either of the forest or river tribes, would starve rather than degrade himself by submitting to it. However, if the panthers and jaguars became at all troublesome, or if any calves had been killed by the wild dogs, Neculpichüi would instantly be on the alert at the head of his people, and seldom failed to bring in half a dozen skins, when he could rouse the men so far as to undertake a regular hunt. He also knew to a day the time I had appointed for treading out the corn; and attended punctually with his tribe to drive the horses round in the *trilla*.[24] When that operation was finished; (which, by the way, was rather a season of feasting and dancing, than of serious employment,) he and his men were of the greatest use to me on the *rodéo*, by assisting my peons to drive in cattle and horses to be branded, from the mountainous parts of the neighbourhood of El Bergantin, which are almost inaccessible to any except Indians. On these occasions, I always gave them a bullock, besides plenty of aguardiente and tobacco; so that we used to part mutually satisfied with each other.

"When the war broke out, I was one of the first to join the standard of *La Patria*, under the command of Miranda. I had many and deep injuries of my own to revenge on the Godos, independently of my country's wrongs; and I took with me a strong guerilla, composed entirely of my own tenants and peons from the plantation of Peñuelas. Although the Indians very rarely interfered, at that period of the war, in favour of either party, even by giving intelligence, (in which it must be allowed, they have now become tolerably expert,) I was surprised to see Neculpichüi constantly hovering about the army, at every place where we halted, either alone, or with several of the most active young men belonging to his tribe. I farther remarked that, when I was detached on any separate expedition with my guerilla, he always followed at a short distance, and frequently threw himself in my way, as if to invite my notice. He was regularly provided with intelligence of my wife and family's welfare, by means of messengers from among his own people; while at the same time, he never communicated any news to me, unless I directly questioned him.

"I was puzzled to account for this conduct, for he evidently did not follow the army for the sake of plunder, as neither his tribe, nor any that I ever heard of, would venture to have in their possession the spoils of the dead; neither did it ever occur to me as possible, that an Indian could be capable of anything like attachment to a white man; for they themselves are used to say, that—'their affections are buried in the *Huacos*, which contain the bones of their slaughtered ancestors.' It appeared how-

ever in this case, that I had formed an unjust opinion of them. Little did I imagine that a set of men, whom the Spaniards have taught us to despise as degraded selfish beings, incapable of taking an interest in anything beyond mere animal enjoyments, could be so grateful for the slight protection, or rather mere shelter from the weather, that I occasionally afforded that tribe. As to any other benefits conferred on them, they were fully balanced by the services they used to render me unasked, as I have already observed.

"An accident of rather a serious nature, which befel me on our first campaign against the royalists in the department of Coro, convinced me of the interest Neculpichüi took in me, and manifested by a series of more important services, than I could ever have believed it possible for an Indian to have the power of rendering. While charging a corps of Spanish cavalry, on the borders of the Laguna de Maracaybo, I received a deep sabre cut over my forehead, obliging me to turn my horse's head a little out of the confused mêlée, in order to get the wound bound up; for it bled so profusely, that I could not see to handle my lance. I had not galloped far, before a shot from one of the enemy's field-pieces struck my horse in the flank; and he fell dead, entangling me in the stirrups, and rolling over me. I was so severely stunned by the fall, and faint with the loss of blood, that I was unable to make any exertion towards extricating myself, for some time; and when I at length raised myself on one arm, and endeavoured to draw my legs from under the dead animal, I saw two of

Spanish cavalry, belonging to the corps with which my guerilla had been engaged, close to where I lay. The motion that I made caught their attention; and one of them, riding up to me, made three or four cuts at my head with his sabre, which I parried, in the only way then in my power, with my bare hand and arm. The other Godo, observing that his comrade could not put me *fuera de camino* so easily as he expected, joined him; and poising his lance very deliberately, gave me two desperate thrusts in the chest, which stretched me once more quietly alongside of my horse; being, as the Spaniard and I myself both supposed, mortal wounds.

"How long I lay insensible I cannot say; but when I opened my eyes, which was all my weak condition would then permit me to attempt, it was a starlight night, and I found myself on the sandy beach, supported in the arms of Neculpichüi, who was bathing my forehead and temples with cold water from the lagoon. I endeavoured to speak, but could not articulate a word; for my throat was dry almost to suffocation. The cazique observing this, poured some aguardiente from a tapára, which was slung to his belt, into a calabash; and having mixed it with water, held it to my lips. Although I could scarcely swallow at first, a few drops revived me sufficiently to enable me to enquire, with a considerable effort, where my guerilla was. Neculpichüi shook his head, and pointed to a line of bivouac fires not far off, saying, in a low tone,—'*El Cachupín ganò !*'

"I knew by his answer that the day was lost for La Patria; but felt, in the weakness of the moment,

perfectly indifferent about everything, and as though I had much rather die where I lay than be removed. I relapsed into insensibility, from which I was roused by being lifted in the arms of two or three Indians, who carried me to a canoe that was hauled up on the sandy beach. They laid me gently on a grass mat spread in the bottom of the canoe, covering me carefully from the night breeze with their mantas, which they threw off for that purpose; then, launching it with as little noise as possible, they paddled rapidly across the lagoon.

"Neculpichüi, who was seated in the stern steering, raised my head on his knees, and moistened my lips occasionally with some limes that lay in the bottom of the canoe; shaking his head, in token of displeasure, as often as I attempted to speak to him, for the purpose of enquiring whither they were conveying me. Towards the centre of the lagoon, we passed through a broken ripple, caused by a strong current running over a rocky bottom; and the abrupt motion of the canoe gave me such acute pain, by displacing the bandages on my festering wounds, as to arouse me thoroughly from the species of lethargy, into which I was again fast sinking. The enemies' fires were soon lost in the distance; and I could perceive that we were approaching the eastern side, where the mountain forests, near the point of Los Morciegalos, overshadow the lagoon.

"The cazique steered the canoe into a narrow creek, completely darkened by the shade of the Caoba trees, which threw their branches across it. Having followed its windings, until we had

completely lost sight of the lagoon, the three Indians who paddled the canoe stepped ashore, and cleared the underwood, with their machetes, from a spot of ground a few yards in circumference. They then lifted me carefully out of the canoe, and laid me on the ground; after which they cut branches from the trees, and reeds from the edge of the creek, and commenced building a low hut over me, just large enough to contain one person in a reclining position.

"While they were finishing this rancho, which, under their practised hands, occupied them little more than a quarter of an hour before it was ready for my reception, day broke; and Neculpichüi, who had been busy searching for herbs and roots, under the trees on the banks, came to me and began to examine my wounds. The sabre cut on my forehead, although deep, proved to be of little consequence, as did also those on my left hand and arm, in comparison to the two lance-thrusts on my breast; but these had fortunately failed of reaching any vital part. After washing these with aguardiente and water, my Indian surgeon bruised some leaves, which he had collected in the wood, on a broad stone, and bound them over my wounds; tearing up his own shirt and that of one of his companions, (all of whom I now recognized as belonging to his tribe,) for bandages. Neculpichüi then took an earthen olla out of the canoe, and gave the other Indians some directions in their own language; on receiving which, they re-embarked, and paddled with their usual silence and celerity out of the creek.

"The cazique produced a *mechéro*, with flint and steel, out of the folds of his broad green shall. Having struck a light, he kindled a fire close to the hut, in such a position as that he could watch me while seated near it, and be ready to assist me at any sign that I might make. Having half filled the olla with water from the creek, he set it on the fire, and put into it several roots which he had previously pounded. He then chipped some bark from the stem of a low tree with dark glossy leaves, growing beneath the Caobas; and having added it to the mixture in the olla, he removed it from the fire, and suffered it to cool; muttering over it meanwhile what appeared to be incantations, in the Indian tongue. When it was sufficiently cooled, he brought me some of this beverage in a calabash, and continued to supply me with it at intervals during the day.

"At night the canoe returned; and the Indians who came in it brought with them a basket of citrons, limes, and *guanávanas*, and a few fowls, which Neculpichüi informed me were for my use. There was also a bundle of dried fish, plantains, and *arracácha* roots for the cazique; and they had taken care to provide some blankets, and cooking utensils. When I saw these preparations making, I began to be uneasy at the thoughts of remaining for any length of time in my present situation. I enquired of my physician, whether it were possible to convey me in the canoe to some village on the borders of the lagoon, where I might lie concealed, until I should be sufficiently recovered to return to the patriot army under Miranda. He assured me,

that I could in no place be half so secure as where I then was; for Monteverde had detached parties in every direction, for the purpose of intercepting those who had escaped from the defeat of the preceding day. I was therefore obliged to acquiesce, and practise what patience I could; Neculpichüi having informed me, that he had already despatched one of his tribe across the mountains, to acquaint my wife and family that I was in safety under his care; and that he would undertake to have me conveyed to my plantation, as soon as my strength would admit of my being moved.

"This considerate precaution, taken by the old cazique, set my mind at rest; which, together with such medicines as his knowledge of roots and herbs enabled him to compound, had the effect of rapidly relieving me from all febrile symptoms, and finally of healing my wounds. I still remained far too weak to travel unassisted; but was so anxious to return to Peñuelas, whither I knew my guerilla must have retired after its dispersion, that I urged Perrucho impatiently to perform the promise he had made, by conveying me immediately into my own province. He at last yielded to my intreaties; and appointed the night of the next full moon for commencing the journey.

"When the day arrived, two canoes, manned by five Indians each, entered the creek. They brought with them a grass hammoc, which they slung on a stout bambu pole; and three men from each canoe prepared to carry me over the mountainous country between Maracāybo and Barcelona. Neculpichüi led the way, and was followed by my bearers; who

relieved each other at short intervals, and continued to travel rapidly during the whole of the night, without the least rest, except about half an hour at midnight. We concealed ourselves in thickets during the day, continuing the same precaution as long as we were in any danger from Monteverde's troops; but when we reached the valley of Aragoa, the cazique no longer considered it necessary. He then travelled by day-time, taking care to avoid the high road, and rested by night at such plantations as he knew belonged to friends of La Patria: but, where he considered the principles of the inhabitants doubtful, he sought shelter for me in the woods, or in the dry beds of torrents. In the course of ten days, I was restored to my family at Peñuelas, where I learned, as I had anticipated, that almost all the men of my guerilla had returned to their respective farms; very few having fallen at the defeat of Maracäybo, for they had dispersed immediately on their missing me, and had found their way home by different roads.

"As soon as I was once more able to sit a horse, I collected my men, and marched at their head to join Miranda. I found him mustering his forces for the purpose of repelling a threatened attack from Monteverde, who had been reinforced by fresh troops from Cartagena, since the last general engagement. You all know the event of that campaign: it was unsuccessful; and I among many other patriots fell into the hands of the Spaniards, and was consigned to the gloomy casas-matas at La Guayra. I must confess, that I gave myself

up to despair, on this unexpected reverse of fortune. I fully expected, when I heard the sullen grating of the massive iron door, as it closed on us, that it would never more open, for me at least, until the day appointed for my being led out to the fatal *banquillo*.

"The dungeon in which I was confined, together with nearly a hundred companions in misfortune, was a vaulted room, not more than fifteen paces in length by twelve in breadth, situated beneath one of the bastions which composed the fortifications of the harbour. The floor was paved with large round stones, which, hard as they were, served to keep our bodies, when we lay down, from the damp earth, that was perpetually moistened by the chill drippings from the arched ceiling. From the number of prisoners,—many of them wounded, but in vain imploring to be sent to an hospital,—and from the very confined space into which they were crowded, without the least attention being paid to their sufferings, you may easily suppose that we had scarcely room for all to lie at full length at the same time. During the day, one half was obliged to crouch in the corners of the dungeon, while the rest took such exercise as their situation permitted, by jumping, and attempting to dance in their irons. Neither seats nor beds were allowed us; and, as all had been stripped by their captors, if they had clothes or covering of any description worth plundering, those who still possessed ponchos or blankets lent them, when they had slept sufficiently, to their less fortunate comrades.

"For every purpose of light and ventilation, there was but one window, about two feet square, at which those persons from without who had the means of bribing the officer on guard, were permitted to stand for a few moments, to see and converse with their friends in the dungeon. At the same time, it must be observed, that a sentry was constantly stationed at the outside of the window, with orders to listen to every word that was said, and to permit nothing whatever, but clothes and provisions, to be passed in to the prisoners. There were also two gratings to this aperture, separated from each other by the whole thickness of the wall; so that anything brought us by our friends, provided it were small enough to enter the divisions between the thick iron bars, might be pushed by them within our reach, but it was impossible to touch their hand with ours.

"A very scanty allowance of cazada bread was served out once a day, with brackish water *á discrecion*, to those unfortunate prisoners, who had no friends near their place of confinement to supply them with food. This was for some time my case; for no account of my fate had yet reached Peñuelas.

"One evening, however, I heard my name called by the sentry at the window. On looking through the grating, I was rejoiced to see the grave countenance of my faithful cazique, who had heard by some accident that I was confined in these casas-matas, and had come to enquire if it were true. Observing that I was without a capote, (for the Godos, who had taken me prisoner, had stripped me of almost every article of clothing,) he immedi-

corner of the dungeon, where I hastily devoured the masamurra, being the only substantial meal I had made since I had entered the casas-matas. I then dropped the olla on the stones, as if accidentally, and found that the bottom, which was considerably thicker than usual, contained three of those lumps of virgin gold, that are called by miners *papitas*, each weighing near two ounces. Perrucho, as I afterwards learned, made the olla, during the preceding night, for the purpose of enclosing these; and, in truth, there was but little chance of their being detected, unless the sentry had broken the earthen pot.

"I secured the gold in my girdle, and resolved to wait patiently until I had received another supply, before I attempted to obtain the officer's consent to my being removed from the dungeon; taking care to break the pieces of olla as small as possible, and to scatter the fragments in different parts of the pavement, where they lay concealed between the large stones. This precaution may appear to have been unnecessary, because the sentries at the window, being regularly relieved, would be unlikely to observe whether or not the empty ollas were returned; even if such a trifle had been capable of exciting suspicion. Nevertheless, the vigilance of our guards, or rather their eagerness for plunder, was so great, that the slightest unusual circumstance never failed to induce them to search the prisoners.

"Neculpichüi came punctually to the window the next morning, with an olla as before; and I now found myself in possession of six pieces of

gold, worth altogether nearly two hundred dollars, which I rightly conjectured to be amply sufficient to obtain the first step to freedom ;—that of changing my present place of confinement. At the usual hour of the forenoon, the sergeant of the guard entered our dungeon with the sergeant of the relief, to whom he delivered over the prisoners in due form. I took this opportunity of desiring the latter to acquaint his officer, that I had some secret information to communicate to him ; slipping privately into the sergeant's hands one of my gold papítas. He soon returned with an order to follow him to his commander's presence. I found the Godo seated under the shade of the trees on the ramparts, smoking a cigar. The sergeant retired immediately, well knowing what my business must be ; and I offered the officer the gold, without any circumlocution, which I justly considered superfluous; requesting, in return, that I might be allowed the indulgence of being removed from the casas-matas. He received the papítas, without the least remark or acknowledgment ; and calling the sergeant, ordered him to conduct me to the Guardia de Prevencion, on one side of the parade ground in the castle, observing that I was entitled to that privilege, as I had once been an officer.

" Here I found several of my former fellow-prisoners, who were enjoying considerable comfort, in comparison to the situation of those in the dungeons. Perrucho was no longer obliged to have recourse to the contrivance of the olla, for the purpose of conveying to me the funds necessary to obtain my release; for I was now permitted to

have a private interview with him daily, in the Quarto de Bandéra next to the guard-room. He informed me, under the strictest injunctions to secrecy, that his father, who was cazique of the tribe before him, had communicated to him the situation of a *huaco*. Although the treasures concealed in these monuments are regarded as sacred deposits, for the benefit of the descendants of the Yncas, whenever they shall succeed to the throne of their ancestors, (an event to which all Indians look forward with confident expectation,) yet the eminent danger to which I, who had proved myself a friend to his tribe, was exposed, appeared to him one of those extraordinary emergencies, which might fully justify him in making use of a portion of the hidden wealth. I had been prepared to hear this account, on first seeing the papitas; and consequently felt no scruple whatever in availing myself of his generous assistance. He was now enabled to bring me a considerable sum at once; and I soon found myself in possession of sufficient gold for my ransom, as it might be called

" I found this negociation far more difficult than the last. There was not, indeed, the slightest reason for supposing the commandant of the fort to be at all more scrupulous about receiving bribes, than the officers under his orders; but, in this case, there were more subordinate agents to conciliate, (each of whom of course rated his loyalty at a high price,) before there was any possibility of being introduced to their principal. As it was generally understood in the castle, that all those, who had obtained the privilege of being confined

in the Guardia de Prevencion, were either possessed of money, or had means of procuring it, we were watched with the most zealous vigilance; every one, who was in any way employed about the prison, expecting to profit by us.

"My companions informed me, that despatches were occasionally sent from Caraccas, where Monteverde had now established his head-quarters, ordering some of the prisoners for execution. On these occasions the commandant usually summoned before him those who were in our situation; and, if he found there was no chance of their being able soon to ransom themselves, he included them in the warrant, for which his will and pleasure were sufficient authority. We therefore agreed to wait for this opportunity; as we were apprehensive, if we attempted to obtain access to him at any other time, that our funds would be exhausted by the cupidity of the subalterns, to whom we must have applied in the first instance, without our ultimately reaping any advantage whatever from the sacrifice. This had happened in more than one case, to unfortunate prisoners, who had thus been plundered under various pretences, until they had finally fallen, among other victims to the cruel policy of the Guerra á la Muerte.

"In a few days, the fatal order arrived, consigning twelve patriots to death, four of whom were of the number of those confined in the Guardia de Prevencion, and the remainder were in different cells of the casas-matas. The fort-adjutant entered the guard-room, attended by several files of soldiers; and having caused us all to kneel, read aloud

the sentence of the military court at Caraccas. When this ceremony was concluded, our four companions, whose names were mentioned in the document, were conducted to a small cell, called La Capilla, containing an altar with a large crucifix, before which tapers were burning, and strongly secured both by bars and sentries. Four friars of the order of La Merced received them at the door, having it in charge to confess and prepare them for the execution of their sentence, which was to take place that evening at sunset.

"We shortly after received an order to appear before the commandant, and were marched to his house, at the corner of the parade, by a strong escort; although we were only eight in number, and were still heavily fettered by double *grillos*. We were led into a court-yard behind the house, from whence we were called one by one, at intervals of a few minutes. I happened to be the last on the list; and when it came to my turn, I was conducted to a room where the commandant, (an elderly Gallego, who had risen from the ranks to his present situation, after a long service in a regiment condemned to the colonies,) was seated with a single secretary, who wore the uniform and *prezillas* of a sergeant.

"My examination, if it might be so called, lasted but a short time. After I had answered to my name, the secretary pronounced what he doubtless considered a very elegant harangue, chiefly consisting of the praises of his catholic majesty, and bitter invectives against the insurgents, whom he stigmatised as traitors and heretics. He concluded

by warning me, that I must prepare for immediate death, unless I had some very *weighty arguments* to offer in my favour; assuring me that *Su Excellencia*, the commandant, was on the point of inserting my name in a blank sentence of death, which had been forwarded to him from head-quarters, to be filled up.

"At any other time, and under any other circumstances than these, I should have found it difficult to listen with becoming gravity to so barefaced a hint. However, as the commandant assented with an emphatic nod to what his secretary had said, I thought it full time to produce my papítas, and offer them for his Excellence's acceptance; taking care to reserve two for the secretary, which I easily contrived to give him unperceived, as I stood close to his desk. The commandant received the gold with the greatest indifference, as a matter of course; and made a sign to his subaltern, who affixed a private mark to my name, in a list that lay on the desk before him.

"An ordenenza was then called in, and I was led to another room, in which I found all my former fellow prisoners from the Guardia de Prevencion, except two who had been sent to La Capilla, in consequence of not being furnished with those *weighty arguments* mentioned by the commandant's secretary. An armourer belonging to the castle attended, and unrivetted our grillos; and some provisions having been set before us, we were directed to remain quiet where we were until night.

"A little before sunset, we heard the bugles blowing the *llamada* on the parade ground. This

was shortly afterwards followed by the mournful sound of a single unbraced drum, beating the dead march; being the signal, as we well knew, for the death of our unfortunate companions, who were at that moment marching slowly from the Capilla, to be seated on the fatal *banquillos*. A volley of musketry soon made known their fate; but, although we sincerely pitied them, the thoughts of death had become too familiar among us to excite much apprehension, either on our own account, or for others.

"At midnight the secretary appeared, carrying a dark lantern; and ordered us to follow him. We obeyed his summons with as much alacrity as our limbs would permit, cramped as they were by the long continued pressure of the grillos; and he led us between the commandant's house and the Capilla, to a part of the walls where there was but one sentry, whom he passed with the countersign of the night. When we had reached an angle of the fortifications, at a sufficient distance from the sentry's walk to be in no danger of his watching our proceedings, our conductor produced a stout rope, having several knots made in it at equal distances, and fastened it securely round the muzzle of a long twenty-four pounder, which projected over the castle ditch. He set us the example of descending by the rope; and, having guided us to a fordable part of the fosse, he pointed out a corner of the stockade, over which we easily climbed, and found ourselves at liberty on the glacis outside the town.

"The secretary warned us, at parting, against

venturing to appear anywhere in the neighbourhood of La Guayra or Caraccas, as we valued our lives. This was indeed rather superfluous advice; however we scrupulously followed it, separating immediately, and providing for our safety in different directions, as we found it most expedient. I soon found my way into the province of Barcelona, where I met Monágas; and was, before long, at the head of a numerous guerilla, composed partly of my own troops, and partly of recruits.

Since this escape, for which I have to thank my friend Neculpichüi, I have never been taken prisoner; although I have had my share of wounds, besides losing wife, family, and plantation, in the cause of La Patria. But, what says the proverb?—'*Desnudo naci, desnudo me hallo: ni pierdo ni gano!*'" [26]

"True, Tahita Cordilléra!" said Päez; "and many thanks for the entertainment you have afforded us."

Scarcely had Zaraza concluded his recital, when the boy Panchíto met the party, and reported his success in disposing of the packet as he had proposed. He also stated that, after having executed his commission, he had waited in the neighbourhood of the Spanish camp until broad day, and had observed no appearance of the enemy's being about to leave his position; the troops having constructed lines of huts, as if with the intention of making some stay there.

"*Cuerpo de mi padre!*" exclaimed Päez; "do the Cachupins think to colonise the Llanos unmolested? It is time, then, to convince these

Godos that they are but intruders on our land. Resume the lance, niño Panchíto; and do thou, Godomàr, cross the Arãuco at Caujaràl, and recal Rangèl with his carbineers. Let him, while on his way to join us, collect all the cattle he finds in the savanna, and drive them before him. He will find me encamped in front of Morillo, from whom I design to cut off all supplies of bullocks for the future."

CHAPTER XX.

THE REINFORCEMENT.—THE RETREAT.

It is resolved—they march—consenting night
Guides with her star their dim and torchless flight;
Already they perceive its tranquil beam
Sleep on the surface of the barrier stream;
Already they descry—Is yon the bank?
Away! 'tis lined with many a hostile rank.

Lara.

THE long-expected reinforcement at length arrived at Los Capuchínos. A mosquito fleet of boats was seen to anchor, in the evening, some leagues below among the islands; and a light flechéra, in which was one of General Urdanéta's aides-de-camp, brought Bolívar intelligence of the approach of the army that had been quartered in Guayana.

Early on the following day, the whole river appeared studded with the white sails of the launches and piraguas, all full of troops, as might plainly be perceived by the glitter of their arms n the

morning sun. As the gun-boats, twenty in number, entered the broad reach in front of the village, they cast off the tow-ropes, with which they were slowly dragging along the heavy sailing transport vessels; and shooting rapidly a-head, formed line abreast of their commodore, the noted Padilla, displaying their colours, and firing a salute in honour of the Libertador.

As Bolívar had only been delayed from advancing into the Llanos by the necessity of waiting the arrival of Urdanéta's army, he gave orders for the vessels to proceed at once to the northern bank of the Orinoco, and to land the troops at Playa Arenósa. He himself embarked in a flechéra, and crossed the river for the purpose of superintending the debarkation in person, that he might be the better enabled to judge of the actual strength and condition of the reinforcement. As he passed along the line of boats, and was recognised, he was cheered repeatedly by the soldiers, and saluted by the bands of music which accompanied the army. The troops were formed, as they leaped ashore, along the sandy beach from which the landing place derives its name; and from thence proceeded into the savanna, within the belt of forest trees skirting the river. The boats then crossed the river for the forces quartered at Los Capuchínos; and, before night, the whole army was united, and once more encamped in the Llanos.

Bolívar immediately despatched a messenger into the Llanos, to acquaint Páez with his having recrossed the Orinoco, and with his intention of advancing towards the plantations in the neigh-

bourhood of Achaguas. There he would be sufficiently secure from any sudden attack by Morillo's army, whose well-disciplined infantry and artillery he had cause to dread; while, at the same time, he would be in direct communication with Santandèr, by his proximity to the plains of Cazanares. The officer, who was entrusted with this message, found that Päez had literally executed his threat, of cutting off all supplies of cattle from the enemy. He had surrounded their camp with a cordon of light troops, which effectually impeded all foraging on the part of the Spaniards.

Morillo, having in vain attempted to entice his opponent to hazard the event of the campaign on a general engagement, and having been apprised of the threatening state of affairs in New Grenada, found himself under the necessity of retiring from the savannas. He had reaped no farther benefit from his ill judged expedition, than the temporary injury he had inflicted on those individuals whose farms he had burned, and who were consequently more than ever opposed to the royalist cause, and more firmly established in their revolutionary principles. He found himself totally incapable of maintaining a warfare in the heart of a country, where the inhabitants were so closely united, and where he plainly saw that the cause he supported had not a single adherent. The communication between his main body and his corps de reserve had been interrupted, so that no supplies had reached him since his passing the Aräuco; and, latterly, his troops had been reduced to subsist on the rank flesh of the chiguíris from the marshes,

and occasionally on such horses and mules as could be spared from the cavalry and artillery. Even these, he was aware, must soon fail him; and yet he could not resolve on a precipitate retreat, before undisciplined troops, and insurgent leaders, whose military skill he had invariably ridiculed and depreciated. He therefore determined to retire to the town of Achaguas, situated on an island formed by the confluence of some small streams, whose channels unite previously to entering the Orinoco. Here his troops would be sheltered in barracks, and might, if necessary, be enabled to winter, by continually receiving supplies from the hilly country; for there was a ready mode of communication with Lopez at San Fernando, through the natural canal of the Apurito.

While on his march to the pass of Caujaràl, his army was exposed to the incessant annoyance and harassing attacks of the patriot cavalry, which kept the Spanish pickets on the alert, night and day. The horses and mules which had been brought by the invading army from the mountains, and had been always accustomed to be fed on barley, maiz, and chopped straw, lost their flesh and strength daily more and more, when compelled to subsist on the coarse grass of the Llanos. They became at length incapable of dragging along the artillery; and the guns required at least thirty men to each, to extricate them from the swampy ground, in which they were incessantly burying their wheels. The mules, in particular, so serviceable when on hard roads, and in a hilly country, became totally helpless on the soft marshy soil of the savannas;

and, when they chanced to get bogged, would make no effort whatever to free themselves, but would lie down in despair, under their loads. These used at first to be transferred to the soldiers; but their exhaustion, through want of nourishing food, became so apparent, that it was found necessary to destroy all ammunition and baggage, for which there were no beasts of burthen.

The rear-guard became daily more impeded by the crowd of emaciated stragglers who had been unable to keep their places in the line of march, and who, through dread of the rigorous discipline maintained in the Spanish army, had not dared to drop either their arms, or the packets of ammunition which had been distributed among them, although nearly sinking under the weight. At intervals, the wild "vivas!" of an advancing corps of lancers were heard, and the guard was compelled to hurry on to join the main body, and leave their enfeebled companions to the vengeance of the justly incensed Llanéros. The retrograde movement assumed by degrees the appearance of a precipitate retreat, notwithstanding the incessant exertions of the royalist officers; andthe consequences would have been most disastrous, had not the fugitives been stopped by the river Arauco. Morillo stationed a strong guard at the entrance of the wood leading to the pass; and ordered preparations to be made for crossing as speedily as possible.

The canoe, which had proved so serviceable at El Merricúri, had fortunately been preserved; having been transported from place to place with the army, on a carriage which was formed for the

purpose, and fitted with the wheels of a dismounted gun. An unforeseen cause of delay now presented itself, in the scarcity of wood adapted to forming rafts. A sudden rise of the river, caused by the melting of the snows in the Cordilléra, had swept down the dry logs from the sand-banks; and the pioneers were obliged to fell trees for that purpose. This operation was both tedious and uncertain; for it frequently happened that the green timber so cut down, far from being serviceable by its buoyancy, sunk by its own weight, instantly on being launched. Several serious accidents also occurred, during the passage, in consequence of the rapidity with which the rafts were hurried down by the current; its violence being such, as to resist the efforts of those in the canoe to tow them across to their proper landing place; so that some were driven on the stumps of tree, and overturned, with the loss of lives, arms, and ammunition.

Meanwhile, the rear-guard, reinforced by two pieces of artillery, maintained its post, with cool determination, against the attacks of the cavalry; and did not attempt to retreat, until the remainder of the army had crossed the river. The commanding officer then withdrew his men by degrees to the pass; but the diminution of their number, and the consequent slackening of their fire, was speedily perceived by the assailants; and a party of Rangèl's carbineers having dismounted and entered the wood, the post became no longer tenable. The ominous cry of—"*Huya quien pueda!*" was raised; and all hurried down to the water in a panic, endeavouring to secure a seat on one of the rafts. It was in vain

that the officers attempted to rally them by exhortations and threats; the clamour and confusion were so great as to drown their voices.

At this moment, the trumpets of the Guardia de Honor were heard in the wood; and Pãez spurred forward at the head of his Llanéros, with the well known appalling shout of—"*Mueran los Godos!*" There was no longer any time for hesitation. Those of the retreating army who were nearest the river threw themselves, or were precipitated by the press, over the steep banks, and most of them perished in the stream. The remainder were either lanced, as they stood crowded together, or in vain attempted to shelter themselves, by scattering through the wood, where they fell, one by one, by the carbines of Rangèl's corps. Pãez's men thronged eagerly round him, requesting permission to cross the river, and hang on the Spaniards' rear: he was however content with the advantage that had been gained that day, with comparatively trifling loss; and issued orders for the cavalry to retire from the wood, and bivouac for the night in the savanna. He then called for Andres Castro, who had exerted himself that day under his uncle Silvestre's eye, so vigorously, as to attract the attention of his chief, who never failed to observe and praise distinguished gallantry in his followers. Having loudly commended his conduct, he ordered him, as a farther reward, to bear the first news of the invader's retreat, to the emigrants at Cunavíchi.

The Spanish army, meanwhile, continued their march, along the northern bank of the river, towards the town of Achaguas, where Morillo resolved to

fortify himself against any more sudden attacks of the insurgent cavalry. Immediately on arriving there, he detached General Calsáda, with a force consisting of five thousand men, and instructions to penetrate into New Grenada, by the Cordilléra of Cazanares, in compliance with the orders of the Viceroy Zamano. As his army was diminished in number by this distribution of his forces, and weakened by fatigue and scarcity of provisions, Morillo caused trenches to be dug across the principal entrances to the town, and trees to be felled across the pathways through the neighbouring woods, so as effectually to guard against any surprise. A gun-boat, which Lopez had constructed at San Fernando, was sent round from the Apúri, with provisions for the army; and a reinforcement having arrived from the reserve, the Spanish general and his colleagues began to entertain confident hopes of being able to winter in Achaguas; thereby depriving Bolívar and Päez of the only comfortable quarters that could be found, in lower Varínas, during the rainy season.

The Libertador, who was in possession of more direct and certain information respecting the force which the patriots in New Grenada could muster, and the general feeling in their favour manifested by their fellow-citizens, saw, with secret satisfaction, the imprudent resolution taken by his ancient and most inveterate enemy. His own army, hutted along the line of plantations which extended between the town of Achaguas and the Aräuco, enjoyed shelter and security, besides being amply supplied with provisions. He therefore waited tranquilly

for the first intelligence of the result of the engagement, which he foresaw impending, between Santandèr and Calzáda.

Pāez, who had established a moving camp in the savanna, was with difficulty dissuaded from making an immediate attack on the enemy's lines. Achaguas was more particularly considered his own town; and he felt bitterly mortified at its occupation, although temporarily, by royalist troops. Nevertheless, as there were still several months of summer weather remaining, he reconciled himself to the delay, by reflecting that there would be ample time to reinstate the emigrants in their habitations, before the commencement of the rainy season.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE EMIGRANTS.—DISAPPOINTED LOVE.

" Here mark the poor desolate maid,
" By a parent's ambition betray'd;
" Behold, in her fast-fading cheek,
" The tears that her agony speak;
" And here stands the well-belov'd youth,
" Calling Heaven to witness his truth !"

Devil's Bridge.

THE arrival of Andres Castro at the ranchos of the emigrants caused a general movement of curiosity, to hear the news from the army. He first alighted at Doña Rosäura's hut, and communicated to her the pleasing intelligence of the first appearance of a retrograde movement in the Spanish forces; and the well founded expectations entertained by Päez, of the wanderers being enabled, at no very distant period, to return to their hatos and plantations. The news spread rapidly among the

ranchos; and the heartiest congratulations were exchanged by the emigrant families, who were overjoyed at the prospect of a speedy termination of their distress.

Previous to leaving the army at Cäujeràl, Castro had ventured on addressing Silvestre Gomez, on the subject which he had most at heart;—that of his union with his cousin Juanìta. He found his uncle well inclined to further his pretensions, having been highly gratified by Päez's so publicly expressing his good opinion of the young patriot: he therefore took the favourable opportunity now afforded him, as bearer of such welcome tidings, to engage his aunt Paulíta in his favour. He was so fortunate as to obtain a ready consent, provided always he could succeed in procuring that of the party most immediately interested. It was stipulated, at the same time, that the marriage should be deferred until the Spanish army should have totally evacuated the low country of Varínas, and the emigrants should have returned to their villages and farms. Castro was obliged to acquiesce in this decision; and he had now an additional motive for impatiently desiring a speedy and favourable termination of the campaign.

The intelligence he had brought was of so highly interesting a nature, that all the comadres at Cunavíchi assembled to discuss it, and to calculate the length of time that would probably elapse, before they could be enabled to revisit their hatos and plantations. This discussion more especially interested those whose houses had been burned; for it was of the highest importance to them, that their

husbands should have leisure to rebuild them before the winter. All lamented the too great likelihood of their being detained at their present place of retreat, until it would be altogether too late to collect a herd of cows before the spring.

The usual hour for the social meeting at Doña Rosäura's rancho arrived; and a much larger assembly than usual surrounded the door of the hut. The minds of all were necessarily full of the news they had just received; and their conversation turned on the oppression to which they had invariably been subjected by their haughty European masters. Each had some tale of injustice to tell; and, among the rest, Doña Rosäura related the following.

THE BRIDE OF SAN CARLOS.

"My native town, the Villa de San Carlos, was, not many years since, one of the pleasantest places of residence in Upper Venezuela. The violent party spirit, introduced subsequently by the revolution, had not yet raised those artificial barriers between families of opposite political principles, which were afterwards productive of so many feuds, and so much unhappiness. The only appearance of contention or jealousy, then observable, took place in consequence of occasional trifling infractions of the rules of precedence, at high-mass, processions, or bull-feasts.

"One of my earliest companions and friends, at this happy period, was Carmelita Ybañez, the daughter of a wealthy widower, who, being an illiterate man, and sprung from obscure parentage, was the more anxious, from a consciousness of his own deficiencies, to secure for his daughter a good education, and an intimacy with the Hidalguía of the neighbourhood. We were both sent at the same time to board at the convent of Las Monjas Agustínas, where we occupied the same set of cells, and were placed under the care and tuition of the same nun. Our intimacy was such, that we became inseparable companions, at the hours allotted for recreation in the convent garden, and those appropriated to receiving our relations' visits at the grate of the *locutorio*. As we were both aware that our parents had not destined either of us for the black veil, we knew that our residence in the cloister was but temporary. So far were we from feeling any impatience for the termination of our seclusion, that we looked forward with melancholy foreboding to the period of our return to our respective homes; being thoroughly convinced, that the comparative liberty we should then enjoy would not compensate for the necessary interruption of our close and familiar intercourse.

"A few months previous to the day appointed for our leaving the convent, my only brother, Mariano, returned from the college of La Compañia at Popayan, where he had been for some years studying the law: he was in daily expectation of receiving a licence from the Viceroy at Bogotà, authorising him to practice his profession in Vene-

zuela. He frequently attended my mother on her visits to the convent parlour, and scarcely ever failed to see Carmelíta Ybanèz with me. He had been in the habit of constantly hearing of her from me, as my dear and only friend; while she had been prepossessed in his favour, by the description I had often given her of him, and by the perusal of his letters to me; all of which, as well as everything else belonging to either of us, were of common interest. It was therefore little to be wondered at, if they were, from the first moment of their meeting, disposed to think favourably of each other.

"I was probably the first to observe their mutual attachment; and was of course, in due time, the confidante of both parties. To my care and management, as least liable to be suspected, was entrusted the enterprise of receiving and forwarding the billétes which passed between the lovers;—a truly difficult affair to be contrived in a cloister, which is the birth-place of suspicion, and where every look and gesture is watched by the nuns with the most jealous attention. I well knew that Carmelíta's father, Don Bernando Ybañez, looked up to our family, as one of those with which he was peculiarly anxious to be on good terms; and that he would have considered our alliance as highly desirable. I therefore entertained little doubt of soon seeing my brother united to my *comadríta*; as I was well convinced that my father's affection for his only son would readily engage him to consent to the marriage.

"Time passed speedily with us, while we che-

rished these pleasing expectations; and the day soon arrived which was to release us from the restraints of the cloister, and introduce us to the gay world without. After morning mass, we took an affectionate leave of our kind Madre Abadéza, and the sisters under her charge, embracing our young companions, who could not conceal their envy and regret at our departure. We were soon after summoned to the *locutório*, where we found my mother and brother, with Don Bernardo, and a numerous party of relations and friends, who had assembled, as customary on such occasions, to congratulate us on our newly acquired freedom, and to accompany us home. I observed that Mariano, who was of course anxious that a good understanding should subsist between the two families, had taken pains to ingratiate himself with Don Bernardo. In this he had easily succeeded, and had prevailed on my father to invite him to spend the remainder of the day at our house; so that Carmelita and I were not, as we had feared, immediately separated. My brother had now an opportunity of observing my young friend, more closely than it had been possible when the grate of the *locutório* intervened, and when she was partially disguised by the monastic habit worn by the boarders. If he had been previously charmed by her agreeable conversation and pleasing manners, he was now beyond measure fascinated by her beauty and accomplishments.

"Mariano lost no time in making his sentiments known to my father, who by no means approved of so close a connection with Don Bernardo;

notwithstanding, he waived his objections in favour of my brother's wishes, and proposed in due form the union of the families; a proposition to which Ybañez immediately and gladly acceded. It was agreed that the marriage should be deferred until the arrival of my brother's licence to practice as *Avogádo*, which was then considered one of the highest honours a Criollo could aspire to; for it required great interest with Government, as well as the clearest certificates of Spanish descent, and of belonging to a family known to possess unquestionable royalist principles. My father's friends who resided at Bogotà, had already promised to procure this important document from the Viceroy; and, as Mariano entertained not the slightest doubt of shortly receiving it, he was universally considered as the acknowledged *novio* of my young friend Carmelíta. But, alas

> ¿? ' Vino un *Usía*,
> ' Y se llevó la flor que mas quería."

" One of the Oidores, belonging to the Sala de Audiencia, at Caraccas, came to spend a week at San Carlos, on a visit to the governor. He was a fair specimen of the class of men which used to be sent out from Spain to interpret the laws, and decide all important causes, for this unhappy country;—wretches whose avarice, profligacy, and injustice became deservedly proverbial among us. They were generally selected from the lowest class of Spanish Avogádos, having found means to acquire sufficient interest with some *Grande*, attached to the court of Madrid, to obtain appoint-

ments authorising them to administer justice in the colonies. As most of them were men of desperate fortunes, they came out with a firm determination to amass fortunes,—*sea como fuese ;*—in which they never failed to succeed, by the most nefarious rapacity, and unblushing corruption.

" This Oidor, Don Sancho Barragàn, was a short fat Gallégo, who endeavoured to make amends for the insignificance of his figure, by the importance of his strut, and a certain solemnity of manner, which he conceived necessary to be assumed by one of his distinguished station. If the proverb may be relied on, which asserts that—

' Siempre en la traza
' Se ve la nobleza :'—

—it may, I should think, be affirmed, and with equal certainty, that meanness of principle and education can with difficulty be concealed. As for Don Sancho, the more pains he took to disguise his vulgar habits, the more apparent they became, even to us, who had been used to pay implicit deference to all who bore the proud name of Spaniards, and to regard them as patterns of polished behaviour. Nevertheless, in consideration of his rank, his company was in great request at every entertainment given at San Carlos ; his observations, of however trifling a nature, were listened to with respectful attention ; and his attempts at jocularity,—for he had not the slightest pretensions to wit,—met with universal applause.

" If he appeared to greater disadvantage in any one point of view than in another, it was certainly

in his awkward uncouth attempts at gallantry; for he was above all ambitious of distinguishing himself by his devotion to the female part of every society, into which he happened to be introduced. His attentions were evidently addressed more particularly to Carmelita Ybañez. They proved, at first, a source of undisguised merriment to her, as well as to myself; for neither of us entertained the slightest suspicion that he meant anything farther, than to gratify his vanity, by engrossing the attention of the prettiest female in company. So far was Carmelita from supposing him to be in earnest, that the close attendance of her '*Escudéro Sancho*,'—as she used to call him, in allusion to the Squire who attended La Mancha's far-famed Knight,—afforded us both great diversion when alone. However, as his behaviour towards her became more pointedly obsequious every time they met, she determined to request her father's interference, to relieve her from what she began to consider a serious annoyance. To her unspeakable astonishment and dismay, Don Bernardo ridiculed her solicitude, observing that it was extremely improbable that an Oidor, who had seen so much of the world as Don Sancho Barragàn, should be captivated by a young Criolla, who had been educated in a convent, and had mixed in no society whatever but that of a country town; adding that, if it were really so, she might consider herself fortunate, and that he hoped she was not such an idiot, as to hesitate for a moment in her choice, between an Avogádo in expectation and an Oidor in reality.

"When we next met, Carmelita, who dreaded

ner father's violent temper, related this conversation, requesting me at the same time to keep it a secret. She still cherished a hope that it would prove a false alarm; and feared the consequences of a quarrel between Mariano and the Gallégo, as the interest of the Audiencia with the Colonial Government was paramount. It was unfortunately impossible long to conceal the real state of the case from my brother, who became irritated by the pertinacity with which his rival invariably established himself close to Carmelíta, in spite of every discouragement which she ventured to give him in her father's presence, and her marked contempt and dislike when Don Bernardo was absent. At last, I learned from my unhappy friend, that Don Sancho had actually proposed himself to her father, and had been accepted as her suitor, provided the marriage which had originally been agreed on between her and Mariano could in any way be broken off. Don Sancho had taken this on himself; and we very soon felt the effects of his malice.

"An altercation having taken place between him and my brother, to whom he had behaved himself, at a crowded tertulia with gross rudeness, Mariano, who had as yet no suspicion of the truth, was provoked by his sneers, and still more by the insolent airs of superiority he gave himself, to retort on him with such successful sarcasm, as to effectually enrage the malignant Gallégo; extorting from him a threat, that Government should be informed of the impertinence, towards a member of the Audiencia, of one who aspired to the honourable distinction of being enrolled among the Avogádos.

My father was soon made acquainted with the turn the affair appeared likely to take; and immediately demanded an explanation from Don Benardo, whose character, as I before observed, he never thoroughly approved of. Barragàn availed himself of the heat to which the discussion had given rise, as a pretext for breaking off the match; and my father, incensed at his duplicity, ordered Mariano on pain of his highest displeasure to think no more of Carmelita Ybañez.

"I shall not attempt to describe my brother's paroxysms of grief and indignation at the unworthy treatment he had received. He endeavoured to get billétes conveyed to my unhappy friend, who was forbid holding the slightest communication with me; but they were intercepted, and returned to him unopened. Irritated beyond the restraint of prudence, he sought out his rival, and defied him publicly, in no very guarded language, to measure swords with him. This *ultimo recurso* was very far from being unsatisfactory to the Oidor; and the proposal gave him every advantage he could desire over my brother. He made a formal and most exaggerated report to the military governor of the province, of the insult alleged to have been offered, through himself, to the whole Sala de Audiencia; representing himself as in imminent danger of assassination, and demanding signal punishment on the audacious contemner of all constituted authorities. Fortunately the governor, who was an honourable man, well acquainted with my father's character and principles, took the pains to make some enquiries on the subject, and satisfied him-

self that the Oidor was, in fact, the aggressor. Notwithstanding this, he could not venture entirely to disregard the complaint that had been laid before him; but, instead of sentencing Mariano to be imprisoned, or sent to Caraccas for trial, as we all feared would have been the case, he directed him to return for a year to the college at Popayan, from which he had not been many months returned.

" My brother was obliged to submit to his fate; and, as a farther mortification, an official letter arrived shortly after from Bogotà, in which the Viceroy's private secretary stated that, in consequence of information having been received, of the Estudiante Mariano Palmar's having comported himself insolently towards an Oidor of the Audencia Real, it had been considered expedient to withhold the diploma that he had solicited, until a more favourable account should be received, respecting his conduct towards his seniors and superiors in the law. This announcement filled up the measure of my unhappy brother's misfortunes. He saw clearly that there was no prospect of ever obtaining that situation, which had been the sole object of his long and tedious study; and his recent still more bitter disappointment prayed deeply on his spirits. He returned to Popayàn, in utter recklessness of what might be his future fate; and died, in a few months, of a broken heart.

" Carmelita Ybañez was sacrificed to her father's ambition for a splendid alliance. I never saw her more; for immediately after the celebration of her marriage with Don Sancho Barragán, she accompanied him to Caraccas, and from thence to Spain."

Doña Rosáura's auditors, especially the younger part of the assembled group, paid the usual tribute of applause to her melancholy tale, which they were unanimous in praising, although they differed in their estimation of the comparative unhappiness of the two unfortunate lovers. The Padre Cura of Guadualíto entreated them to defer their criticisms until the morrow; for his convalescent patient, Mariano Tupiza, (the Llanéro soldier, who had lost an arm in the skirmish at the pass of Merricúri,) had voluntered, through him, to relate a tale of the Jesuit missions on the Orinoco. Silence having been obtained, the invalid, who had been accommodated with a grass hammock under the trees, in consideration of his weakness, commenced as follows:—

CHAPTER XXII.

CHANABILLU AND ANCAFILA, OR, THE JESUITS OF THE ORINOCO.

A predatory band of mailed men
Burst on the stillness of the shelter'd glen
They shouted—"Death!"—and shook their sabres high,
That shone terrific to the moonlight sky:
They rush—they seize their unresisting prey—
Ruthless, they tear the shrieking boy away.
"Save!" she exclaimed, with harrow'd aspect wild;
"Oh, save my innocent—my helpless child!"

W. L. Bowles.

"Between the point of La Encaramada, on the Southern bank of the Orinoco, and the Carrípano mountains, from which the ancient nation of the Carrípis, (whom the Spaniards call Carríbis,) derive their name, is the wide extended plain of Tepu-pano, or '*Field of the rocks!*' This was formerly, as has been handed down to us by the earliest traditions, the established place of meeting of the many powerful aboriginal tribes which, pre-

viously to the Spanish invasion, inhabited those extensive regions, now a desart waste, lying between the rivers Orinoco and Marañon. Enormous rocks of dark coloured granite, of a cylindrical form, and frequently from fifty to eighty feet in height, tower above the level savannas in many places. These have given its name to the plain; and are pointed to with exultation by the wandering Tamanàc Indians, as evidences of the mighty power of their ancestors, the former lords of the soil, whose work they believe these immense columns to be.

"Great indeed, must have been the changes, both moral and physical, that have passed over the face of this part of the world since those days; for the traveller is now guided by a timid and shrinking savage, but little removed above the level of the brute creation, and totally ignorant of the most ordinary arts of civilised life, through the series of labyrinths, called the caverns of Zarra-güaca, and among the neighbouring Tepu-merremè, (*the ornamented rocks,*) which stand on the same remote plain. In the interior of the former, and on the face of the latter, this wild Indian's more enlightened ancestors have carved, in the hard and durable granite, hieroglyphic resemblances of the sun, moon, and stars, together with panthers and crocodiles, &c., at such a height above the ground, that the traveller cannot but affix some degree of credit to the tradition related to him by his guide, that the sculptors sat to their work in canoes, at a time when all this vast plain was inundated; probably before the Orinoco had worn for its waters a more

rapid and capacious *desaguadéro*, at the pass of Los Râudales.

"Within a few leagues of that stupendous prism of granite, known by the name of El Mogóte de Cucüiza,—which rears its naked perpendicular sides full two hundred feet above the wooded plain, and is crowned with a diadem of majestic forest trees, that shew against the blue sky like the light plumes that wave in a Cazique's cap,—stands the ancient mission called La Fortaleza de San Francisco Xavier. The Jesuits, who conceived that the ordinary modes of conversion to the true faith were too tedious and ncertain, it seems, for their ardent and enthusiastic frame of mind, caused this fortress to be erected, in direct defiance of the express edicts promulgated by the Spanish Government on this subject, and for the acknowledged purpose of '*conquistar las almas*'—('conquering souls'). Their establishments of this nature, which were at one time very numerous, were tolerated by many of the civil governors of the colonies, who furnished the friars with such detachments of Spanish troops,—drafts from condemned regiments, —as they had from time to time at their disposal. They also supplied these garrisons with arms for the native militia, that the Jesuits had enrolled under their banners; and with such munitions of war, as were found necessary for the furtherance, not only of the crusades against the superstitions of the neighbouring Indian tribes, but also of the inroads that the missionaries so often found it necessary to authorize, (if not personally conduct,) for the purpose of providing a sufficient supply of infant converts."

"Then wonders another minute, like Marcus," said the Lion to Invisible, "that the reverend Jesuits were occasionally guilty of kidnapping Indians?"

"Even as a necessary means to some end," answered Invisible. "But I would not willingly be thought to say that it was an occasional stratagem, for it was the only effectual method they had to fill their missionary chapels, so as to be able to furnish a decent quantity list of baptised Indians, for the inspection of the *Senor Obispo*. They took no pains whatever to conceal this mode of recruiting souls, as they called it: and the superiors of the society used to boast of the assistance derived from the secular arm,—meaning thereby the bayonets of their garrisons,—as being highly beneficial to the interests of *La Madre Eglesia*, and to the aggrandisement of the missions in general.

"True it is, that the neighbouring creole settlers did not so much approve of this practice, from which they sustained sundry and frequent inconveniences and losses. They even went so far as to give the line of missionary fortresses the irreverent name of *La Trinchéra del Despotismo Monardl*; for it always kept them in hot water with the Indian tribes, which were in the habit, when they lost any children, of making reprisals on them in kind, as they could not conveniently retaliate on their monastic foes.

"The tribe that had suffered most frequently and severely in this way, (because it happened to be the nearest,) was that of the Tamanàc Indians;

and it had, fortunately for the friars, been so much thinned and weakened by several severe attacks of that ravaging pestilence, *la viruela*, as to be totally incapacitated from openly trying its strength with the militia of La Trinchera. A few years previously to the abolition, in these colonies, of the societies of Jesuits, one of which was to be found in every part of the country, like a little kingdom within a kingdom, the circumstance happened which I promised to relate."

"Thou hast only been commencing, then, all this while, amigo Tupiza!" observed the Cura; "I fear thy promise of brevity was but an empty boast. But proceed, *hijo mio!* with thy tale."

"Chanabillù, the young Cazique of the Tamanàc Indians, was well known, about the time that I speak of, at all the fishing villages and missionary establishments along the Southern bank of the Orinoco, as the bravest warrior, and most skilful hunter of his tribe. His personal prowess in battle, and skill in disposing ambushes, as well as in preparing those sudden and deadly surprizes, which form the most essential part of Indian military tactics, had made him the terror of the neighbouring rival nations of Guayana, the Carríbis and Guagívis, whose rude encampments he had repeatedly reduced to ashes, and whose sons and daughters he had often hurried away into captivity.

"The Spanish Padres Jesuitas, who governed the missionary colonies and garrisons opposite the mouth of the Cabullári, at which Chanabillù used frequently to present himself with panther skins and wild turkeys for sale, had been long most an-

xiously endeavouring to bring him within the pale of the church. They were stimulated to attempt his conversion, not only by the religious motives common to the order they professed, but also by the laudable desire of securing the assistance and co-operation of so powerful and influential a cazique, as an ally to their flourishing little communities. They however saw at length, with unfeigned regret, that all their admonitions and exhortations on this subject were unavailing; for Chanabillù obstinately and enthusiastically persevered in following the religion of his forefathers; and persisted in adoring the new moon, which he worshipped, at her first rising, with all the superstitious ceremonies, and according to the barbarous ritual, of the Tamanàc nation.

"Next to the tribe which he commanded, the object that the cazique most devotedly loved, was his young wife Ancáfila, to whom he had been wedded about a year, and who had lately presented him with an infant son. He had now a new and most powerful motive for exertion in the chase; and never had he been so successful;—not even when his highest ambition consisted in bringing home to the camp hard-won trophies of his activity and perseverance, in the shape of the rarest furs and plumage, to lay them at the feet of his betrothed bride. His happiness, indeed, was so great, that fearful forebodings would often involuntarily arise, to warn him that such perfect felicity could not be expected to last long.

"The missionaries, perceiving that it was in vain to hope for obtaining Chinabillù as a member of their community, or rather, as a vassal of the set-

tlement, determined to gain possession of the infant, at least, that they might snatch it from the darkness of idolatry, and acquire through its means, when grown up to manhood, the influence over the Tamanàc tribe, which they had once hoped for through its father. They therefore ordered out a strong party of the militia belonging to '*La Trinchera del Despotismo;*' and the Superior of the Society of the mission of San Francisco Xavier, Fray Fulgencio Bedoyo, resolved, in consideration of the paramount importance of the object in view, to proceed in person at the head of his faithful retainers, for their more effectual encouragement.

"It was in the middle of the hunting season, among the forests bordering the Orinoco; being also the time when the crops of maiz are ripe. Consequently, when the party arrived in the neighbourhood of the Tamanàc camp, the Indian warriors were all absent in the woods,—too far from their dwellings to obtain any information of the plot that had been secretly formed against their cazique's domestic happiness;—and the females were dispersed among their little *conùcos*, busily collecting the ripe ears of corn, for the purpose of preparing a store of *chicha*, as usual, against the return of their husbands and brothers.

"Fray Fulgencio directed the main body of the militia to halt in a Morichi palm grove, near the Indian camp; while he himself, at the head of a small but select party of Spanish soldiers, guided by an *Indio conquistado* from the mission, advanced through the quebradas, which were overhung with bambu, to the enclosure surrounding the

chacra of the cazique Chamabillù. His wife, Ancáfila, who was too pleasingly occupied in gathering maiz, for the welcoming feast of her warrior, to think of danger, had just laid her infant boy, little Califiàn, under the shade of a plantain tree, while she carried a heavy basket of corn to her hut. The marauders, who watched her motions from behind the enclosure, apprehensive of causing any alarm that might give them additional trouble, took the opportunity of her departure to seize on the child, and hurry him off to the palm grove. Having joined the main body, they immediately commenced a rapid retreat to the neighbouring river Paruasi; where they embarked in the piraguas that had brought them thither, and returned to the mission of San Francisco Xavier.

"Mothers alone can judge of the feelings of Ancáfila, when, on her return in search of another basket of maiz, she paused to refresh herself with a look at her sleeping first-born. Perhaps her agony, although smothered, was the more intense, for not being outwardly expressed. Even the women, among the uncivilised Indians, seldom fail to remember what they owe to the honour of their husbands and their tribe; and struggle in silence against the most fearful calamities, rather than disgrace the wives and mothers of warriors, by tears and lamentations.

"The infant, she reflected, was too young to have crept away into the bushes;—and yet there were no stains of blood on the wild cotton on which she had laid him; consequently he had not been torn from her by some prowling jaguar or *camondi-*

snake;—all this passed through the mother's mind with an Indian's quickness of drawing inferences; and the truth at once flashed upon her, that he must have been stolen by a party of marauders from the missions on the Orinoco. Even this conviction, terrible as it was to Ancáfila, in some measure relieved her mind from the overwhelming weight of despair that had at first oppressed it. She felt assured that her child was alive; and hesitated not a moment in setting off to track the foot-steps of the retreating robbers;—alone, for she believed that a mother's eyes could not err, nor her judgment be deceived, when on such a quest;—barefoot, for each moment was too precious to be wasted in returning to the hut for her sandals; and she thought not of the natural fence of prickly-pear bushes, which encircles the outskirts of the Orinoco forests.

"In a few moments, she had discovered the breach in the fence, by which Fray Fulgencio and his followers had entered the plantation; and followed their track by those slight and apparently trifling indications,—such as the position of a few leaves, which had evidently been lately altered from that in which they had originally fallen; or the dew recently brushed off from a bed of reeds;—which few beside an Indian could possibly have remarked; or, remarking, could have correctly interpreted.

"Under the Morichal, she observed that the grass had been much trampled since morning; and the shells of freshly gathered dates were lying scattered in such numbers, that she was convinced

that the main body of the marauders must have halted there. She again fixed on the track, which was now become far more visible; and, on reaching the landing-place at the banks of the Paruasi, her doubts were changed at once to certainty, by finding a small but well remembered toy, which Chanabillù had carved with his knife from a cäymán's tusk, and she had hung round her infant's neck, with a plaited cord of her own hair. Trifling as this discovery was, it inspired her with fresh resolution to pursue the despoilers; for she fancied that some kind warning spirit had thrown this memorial of the little Califiàn in her way, purposly to encourage her in her (otherwise) hopeless task.

" The forests, on the banks of the Orinoco's tributary streams, are so choked with underwood and mangrove bushes, as to be impervious to every living being, (except the huge water-snakes and alligators which lurk beneath it) unless in the narrow cattle tracks, that merely lead from the savannas to the brink of the river. Consequently, Ancáfila soon found the absolute necessity there was for seeking some mode of conveyance down the stream; and she fortunately recollected, that her warrior had nearly finished a light canoe of bark, purposely for her use, which he kept for safety, and used to amuse himself by painting with *onóto*, and ornamenting by carving, in the neighbouring cavern of Zarra-güáca.

" She hurried thither, across the savanna, with the speed of a terrified antelope; and soon reached the gloomy entrance of the cave, which, under any other circumstances, would have inspired her with

superstitious awe. She however entered,—though with an unsteady step, and a palpitating heart; for these caverns are currently reported to be the abode of malignant genii, and of restless unhappy spirits;—and had nearly reached the spot, where she had last seen her canoe hung up between two lofty stalactites of spar, when a hollow groan, as of a human being, faint with excessive pain and exhaustion, smote her affrighted ear. Her first impulse was to turn and fly; but she recollected her infant, and the thought gave her courage to dare the worst that could befal her, rather than shrink from her enterprize. She could already distinguish the taper form of the light canoe, as it hung half shrouded in the gloom of the cavern; when, as she extended her arms to reach it, she stumbled over a man, who lay stretched on the ground beneath it, and heard her name faintly uttered by the well known voice of her warrior, the cazique Chanabillù.

" Although scarcely able, at first, to articulate, he by degrees recovered sufficient strength to explain to her, that one of his own arrows, dipped in the deadly *urralì* poison, had fallen from a wounded tucàn, as it fluttered over his head among the branches of a congria tree, and had grazed his ancle slightly, but sufficiently to communicate to the blood a highly dangerous portion of venom. As he happened to be separated in the pursuit of game, at the moment, from his brother hunters, he had dragged himself to the cavern, in hopes of being able to launch the canoe in the neighbouring river, before the fatal lethargy, the precursor of

death, should seize him, and his strength should fail him.

Ancáfila had scarcely heard the cause of his weakness and agony, when she pressed her lips to the scar inflicted by the arrow, and soon succeeded in assuaging the violence of the symptoms. She next sought for, and procured healing herbs, which grew in the savanna round about the entrance of the cavern; and having bruised them on a stone, and applied them to the wound, related in a few words the misfortune that had befallen them both, and her determination of pursuing the marauders who were even then bearing away her infant. Chanabillù urged her immediate departure, and she set out for the river Paruasi, bearing with her the light canoe; having previously placed beside her warrior a plentiful supply of wild fruits, and a calabash full of the cool and limpid water from the subterranean stream, which traverses a part of the cavern of Zarra-güáca, and loses itself beneath the broken and disjointed strata of rock at one end of it.

"Ancáfila launched the canoe on the Paruasi; and proceeded rapidly down its eddies the whole of that night, constantly plying the paddle. At the early dawn, she beheld the grey towers of the Fortaleza de San Francisco Xavier, rising out of the morning mist, in the thick woods by which it was embosomed; and concealing her canoe beneath the mangrove bushes, she advanced, with no outward signs of agitation or fear, to the gate. On demanding to see the *Padre Superiòr*, she was ushered into the presence of Fray Fulgencio.

Without preface or circumlocution, she informed him, that she was the mother of the infant which had been last brought from the woods into that convent; and that she had come to offer herself as a willing convert, on condition of being appointed its nurse. By the friar's hesitation in answering,—for he was completely taken by surprize,—she perceived at once that her child was there, under the same roof with herself; and she renewed her entreaties in such moving terms, that the stern *conquistadòr de almas* could not but grant her request. He gave orders that the little Indian should be entrusted to the care of its mother; but he warned her, at the same time, that the very next morning, at the hour of high mass, she must prepare to renounce for ever her idolatrous worship, and her heathen husband, on penalty of being turned out of the mission, and deprived of the privilege of nursing an infant, that would thenceforward be enrolled among the number of the vassals of that establishment. Ancáfila instantly assented to everything he said,—she knew not what,—in her eagerness once more to embrace her infant; and having folded it to her bosom, in a transport of maternal affection, she followed a lay-brother to a cell, which Fray Fulgencio had ordered to be prepared for her, overlooking the garden of the mission.

"When she found herself alone, and no longer exposed to the prying gaze of those by whom her feelings could not have been comprehended, she gave way to her maternal affection, with such intense earnestness, as to exclude from her mind every other idea. She forgot, for some blissful

moments, that she and her infant were captives, in the power of those by whom the religion of their ancestors was considered a crime; and that their natural protector was languishing in the damp air of a cavern, racked with extreme bodily and mental agony. It was not until the vesper bell pealed from the turret of La Fortaleza, that she started from the couch of deer skins, on which she had thrown herself, and at once recovered that energy and decision, which seldom fails to animate even the weakest of the Indian race, in the hour of peril and suffering.

"From the window at which she stood, she could distinctly see the dark habits of the Padres, as they passed slowly into the chapel of the mission; and when the last of those whom she considered as her persecutors disappeared, closing the door after him as he entered, she bound her little Califiàn on her shoulders, with a secure fold of her mantle, and descended lightly from the window by means of a scarlet flowering *bejuco*, which grew against that side of the building which faced the garden. Breathless with apprehension, and shrinking at every breath of wind that stirred the leaves of the pomegranate trees, she hurried across the spacious garden, which was surrounded by a lofty wall, as a necessary precaution against the incursions of wild deer, or those more mischievous as well as more active rangers of the forest, the red *araguato* monkies. In a corner next the river, which flowed close under the foundation of the wall, grew a tall *guanávana* tree. This Ancáfila contrived to ascend, though with some difficulty; and, having

climbed along one of its lowest spreading branches, until she had gained the outside of the wall, she let herself drop fearlessly, and, fortunately, without receiving the slightest injury whatever, into a tangled thicket of low mangrove bushes, which grew beneath, mingled with reeds, and which effectually broke her fall.

"Mi Señora Rosäura will easily imagine, how rapidly and incessantly Ancáfila plied her *canaléte*, as she urged her light canoe up the stream. Her flight, however, was discovered, shortly after she left La Fortaleza; and she was followed by a piragua, full of armed militia, who had orders to bring back her and the infant, alive or dead. Towards the end of her toilsome journey, early the next morning, her pursuers had gained so much on her, that she could occasionally hear their shouts echoing among the woods, as they alternately encouraged and threatened the vassal Indians, who were rowing the piragua. Just as she reached the landing place, and while she was stepping on shore, she saw the piragua foaming onwards, as it rapidly shot round a point on the river, not a bow-shot from her; and she heard the exulting yells of the soldiers, who had already caught sight of her. Despair lent her fresh strength, and she tottered across the savanna towards the cavern of Zarra-güáca, which she entered a few moments before her pursuers came up. While they paused for a while at the mouth of the cave, unable at first to penetrate the thick darkness that reigned within, she rushed into the interior, calling on the name of her warrior. No answer was returned to her frantic appeal; for the

deadly *urrali* poison had triumphed, and Chanabillù was no more.

"The merciless satellites of the *Trinchera del Despotismo Monacal* now rushed forward to seize the wretched Ancáfila. Escape appeared hopeless; but she was armed against the worst that could befal her, even by the recklessness of despair. She cast one last look of anguish on the lifeless body of her warrior; and then, straining her infant to her bosom, she plunged into the eddies of the subterranean torrent, at the very spot where it sinks through the clefts of the rifted rock; and disappeared for ever."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WIZARD'S BRIDGE.—THE DEFEAT.

There was a deep ravine, that lay
Yet darkling in the tyrants' way;—
Fit spot to make invaders rue
The many fall'n before the few.
The torrents from that morning's sky
Had fill'd the narrow chasm breast-high;
And, on each side, aloft and wild,
Huge cliffs and toppling crags were pil'd,
The guards, with which young freedom lines
The pathways to her mountain shrines.

The Fire-Worshippers.

THE division which Morillo had detached, under General Calzáda's orders, to attack the patriot army commanded by Santandèr, traversed the plains of Cazanares, and reached the feet of the Cordilléra, without meeting the least interruption. The inhabitants of the small villages of Betolles, Tamen, &c. situated at the commencement of the mountainous country, had fled at the Spanish army's approach; and Calzáda found considerable difficulty in procur-

ing a guide for the troops, through the intricate wilds of the Cerrania. After much diligent search in the neighbouring country, one of the reconnoitring parties brought in the Maroméro and his family, who had been exhibiting their feats of activity to the Cerrános, and were on their way towards the savannas.

The general found, on closely interrogating the Chinganéro, that he was perfectly well acquainted with the different mountain passes, and paths leading to them through the forest; although, either from an innate abhorrence of every species of restraint, or from fear of offending the patriots, he evinced a decided repugnance to undertaking the office of guide. Calzáda, however, ordered him into the close custody of the advance guard, with orders to shoot him instantly on his attempting to escape, or proving treacherous in his performance of the office thus forced on him. His family and companions were set at liberty to pursue their journey; and the army entered the rugged defiles of the lower Cordilléra.

The progress of the troops through the devious vallies was necessarily slow, although uninterrupted by any obstacles of sufficient consequence to break the line of march; but, as the path ascended, and followed the course of the mountain torrents, the soldiers were no longer able to maintain the regularity of their columns. This was particularly the case at the fords, which were repeatedly to be crossed; for a crowd invariably collected at the pass, while those who had already gained the opposite bank straggled forward to join their comrades.

Frequent halts were consequently necessary during the day, to avoid dispersing the troops; and orders to this effect were occasionally communicated, by means of bugles stationed at intervals along the line; there being no possibility, in many parts of the road, of transmitting a message by any other means. At night, the troops bivouacked in groups along the path, seated round fires, for which there was an abundant supply of decayed wood in the forest.

The Spaniards proceeded in this manner for two days, without any alarm being given by their reconnoitring parties, or appearance of an enemy being near; but, on the third evening, the officer commanding the advance sent back a messenger to the general, announcing that the insurgent army was in possesion of an eminence commanding the road, by which the guide declared it to be necessary to pass. On receiving this intelligence, Calzáda advanced with his staff to the head of the army, for the purpose of reconnoitring the enemy's position, and making the requisite arrangements for an attack.

He found his advanced guard halted in front of a natural bridge, formed across a deep ravine by two vast masses of rock, which, undermined by wintry rains, or shaken from their bed by some violent earthquake, had fallen against each other, and lay firmly jammed between the opposite sides of the chasm. A small picket was alone visible, as yet, of the enemy's force; but the officer of the advance assured Calzáda, that he had heard bugles, and the conchs of the warlike Indians of Zocorro, blown in different parts of the wood on the other

side, which left no doubt of the insurgents' intention to make a stand there.

As the bridge, situated half way down the chasm, was narrow and difficult of access, so that but few men could advance over it at once, the troops would be inevitably exposed to a severe loss, before a sufficient number to attack the position could cross, unless a diversion were by some means made in their favour. Calzáda therefore carefully reconnoitred the ravine, both above and below the pass; and succeeded in discovering two distant points, at which he conceived it possible for active and intrepid men to let themselves down from tree to tree, and, after fording the torrent, to climb up the opposite cliff with the assistance of roots and brushwood. Two companies of the Cazadores de la Reyna were ordered on this perilous and important service; and having conducted the officer commanding each of them to the spots he had selected, Calzáda directed them to make themselves acquainted with the direction necessary to be taken, while sufficient daylight yet remained. As soon as it was dark enough to conceal their approach, they were to pass with their respective companies, as silently as possible, and to advance as near the flanks of the enemy as they could without danger of detection.

The wily Chinganéro unexpectedly appeared interested in the success of the enterprize; and having volunteered to conduct one of these companies, was attached to that destined to cross farthest up the ravine. Towards midnight, about

lzáda calculated on both parties hav-

ing gained the opposite side, a small field-piece was to be fired, as a signal for them to commence an attack on the enemy at different points. The advanced guard, supported by the whole army, was then to cross the bridge and storm the position; in the confident expectation that the insurgents, confused by being assaulted in three places at the same moment, would be able to offer but a faint resistance.

As Calzáda returned along the line to his usual station in the centre, he issued the necessary preparatory orders; and the troops attentively examined their fire-locks, loading deliberately and carefully, in anticipation of a serious conflict before the morrow's dawn. This duty having been performed, they kindled fires at short intervals, and busied themselves in preparing the evening repast; for the near approach of peril has by no means the effect of spoiling a soldier's appetite, as perhaps might be supposed by a citizen nurtured in peace and tranquillity.

The shades of night sank rapidly down on the deep mountain glen, which appeared gloomier through the contrast offered by a solitary peak of the Andes, seen far to the North, still reflecting the last rays of the setting sun from its snow-covered summit, and resembling a small conical cloud of a bright red hue. The thick white mists of autumn began to ascend from each shallow brook occupying the deep gully, through which the wintry torrent was wont to burst its impetuous way from the forest depths that gave it birth. As they slowly and majestically arose, they concealed from the Spa-

niards' view the Puente del Brujo, and the opposite woods, in which the patriot army lay expecting, and fully prepared to receive, the midnight attack. As the troops concluded their soldier's meal, they laid themselves down to rest, for the brief space that still remained previous to being called into action, with as much composure as though they had been in winter quarters, secured against disturbance of every description until the sound of the reveilliez. By degrees, the low but distant hum of the multitude, and the frequent

" loud laugh, that spoke the vacant mind,"

died away, and were succeeded by a stillness, as if the adverse hosts, which were in a few short hours to grapple in deadly strife, and awake to all the maddening excitement of the battle, were already hushed in the silence of the grave. Not a sound was heard, but the occasional stern challenge of the sentries on either side, as the patroles paced their rounds: and, at intervals, the mournful hooting of the eagle owl, which resembles the wild laugh of a maniac, echoed through the ravine.

When the appointed hour arrived, Calzàda himself conducted the two parties ordered for the attack on the flanks of the enemy's position. Having repeated his directions and cautions to the officers in command, aud having seen them descend into the thickly wooded ravine, he returned to the station of the advanced guard, where he remained in readiness to direct the onset.

The officer who commanded the party, which the Chinganéro had volunteered to guide, was at

first inclined to be distrustfulof his fidelity. At the same time, it was impossible, on account of the rugged and precipitous nature of the descent, to continue the precaution that had been adopted by the advanced guard, of keeping him manacled to one of the leading files. However, every suspicion was soon lulled to rest, by the caution which the guide manifested in proceeding, so as to avoid all possible noise, and the activity with which he swung himself from tree to tree, assisting occasionally both the men and their officer, where any particularly dangerous pass appeared to require his help. The party descended, without an accident, into the bed of the torrent, which proved little more than knee deep; and commenced, slowly and silently, to scale the opposite acclivity. In this manner, they had reached a small rocky platform, where they had barely room to stand, and from which the only possible means of ascent to the level ground where the patriot army was encamped, was by climbing the face of an abrupt precipice, aided by a single thick bejuco, which hung down from the forest above.

The Chinganéro lightly ascended this, with the activity acquired by the exercise of his profession; and extended his hand, when the officer was within reach of the bushes growing on the summit, as if to assist him in gaining the level ground. But the Spaniard had scarcely attained the edge of the cliff, and was in the act of grasping the projecting roots of a tree, when the Indian suddenly snatched the officers' sabre from its scabbard, and made a desperate cut at his hands, compelling him to re-

linquish his hold, and dashing him over the precipice. In his fall he dislodged several of his men from their unsteady position: and, as they rolled headlong down the side of the quebráda, two of their muskets went off, and effectually alarmed the patriot camp by their report, redoubled as it was by the mountain echoes.

The nearest patroles hurried to the spot from whence the firing was heard to proceed, and found the Chinganéro, who was personally known to the greater part of the army, flourishing the Spanish officer's sabre, and exulting in his successful treachery. He briefly explained to the serjeant of the patrole the danger that he had averted from the camp; and warned him of that by which it was still threatened if prompt measures were not adopted to repel the corresponding attack, that might be expected on the other flank. The serjeant immediately sent him to Santandèr, and opened a destructive fire on the defenceless party of assailants immediately beneath, who were distinctly visible by the star-light. Many of them fell, mortally or dangerously wounded, and among the rest their unfortunate leader; who, though almost disabled by the sabre cut and the bruises received in his fall, was exerting himself to extricate his men from their critical situation; all hopes of succeeding in the enterprize assigned him being evidently lost.

Meanwhile, the other company of cazadores had crossed the quebráda, and gained the heights unobserved. As they lay concealed among the bushes, waiting for the appointed signal to commence the

attack, they heard the firing, and readily concluded that their comrades had been prematurely discovered. They were soon called on to make good the ground they had ventured on occupying; for Santandèr, having learned from the Chinganéro the point by which they would probably threaten his position, detached two companies of the Pardos del Barlovento to intercept and dislodge them. Although these mulatto troops advanced with the stealthy noiseless pace of Indian hunters, and were unincumbered by either shoes or sandals, their approach was betrayed to the Cazadóres, by the rustling of the dry leaves, and crackling of the small branches, as they moved steadily onwards in two close columns. When within twenty paces of the bushes, among which the royalists were standing as silent and motionless as statues, the Pardos halted for a moment to listen, and the Spanish officer seized that opportunity to give the words—"*Apunten! Fuego!*"

The command was followed by a vivid flash from the muzzles of a hundred muskets, and by a rattling volley which echoed like thunder through the forest, doing no small execution among the close columns, at which it was aimed with all the coolness and deliberation of discipline. The patriots were thrown into momentary confusion, by the suddenness of the check they had so unexpectedly encountered; but being quickly rallied by their officers, they deployed into line, and commenced a heavy though irregular fire on their opponents.

Calzáda, meanwhile, was seated on the trunk of a fallen tree, near the watch-fire of the advanced

guard, listening with intense anxiety to every distant sound, and looking with undisguised impatience, alternately on his watch, and the stars which glittered with their usual brilliance in the small space of deep blue sky to be seen above the ravine. His watchful eye caught the flash from the pieces accidentally exploded by the fall of the soldiers; and the report which followed extorted from him the impatient exclamation of—"*Malhaya la suerte*!" His resolution, however, was soon taken, on hearing the firing of the patrole, and the rapid rolling of drums mingled with the piercing notes of bugles, which burst from every part of the patriot camp. He despatched an aide-de-camp with orders for the signal gun to be instantly fired; and directed the advanced guard to move forward towards the bridge, without farther delay.

Before the aide-de-camp could reach the spot where the small piedréro was stationed, the firing commenced between the mulattos and the cazadores. This diversion, however, failed to produce the effect Calzáda had anticipated from it; for Santandèr gave himself but little concern about it, having been apprised by the Chinganéro of the actual strength of the assailants.

The Spanish advanced guard followed their officer, with trailed arms, and at as rapid a pace as the broken ground permitted, across the rocky bridge. The small picket stationed there by the patriots, more for the purpose of observation than defence, fired at the royalists as they approached, and immediately retreated on the main body, in obedience to Santandèr's orders. It was his object

to come to a decisive action, if possible, with Calzáda, and he had determined on permitting the greater part of his army to cross the bridge, before closing with them. For this purpose, he had drawn up his troops behind the high banks that crowned the defile leading to the Puente del Brujo, where they lay concealed until an entire regiment had passed, and the bridge was crowded with the men of the next corps hurrying eagerly forward to the attack. The patriots then rose simultaneously, and opened a heavy fire on the royalists, who were by no means slow to return it. The superior discipline and alertness of the latter, enabled them to make a most determined and obstinate resistance; attempting, wherever the ground would permit them, to close with their insurgent enemies, and drive them from their position at the bayonet's point. But only a few could ascend the steep banks at any one part; and they were invariably repulsed by the creoles, who were far more active, as well as dexterous in the use of every description of *arma blanca*.

The Spanish general, who had advanced in person with the centre of his army, was detained midway on the bridge by the throng, which struggled in vain to reach the scene of conflict. The confusion and crowding became so excessive, that many were forced over the edge of the rock into the abyss beneath; none being able to advance, except such as found room by climbing over the bodies of the dead and dying, to fall, in their turn, in a hopeless attempt to gain the level ground. Calzáda judged it expedient to retreat, for the

purpose of saving the remainder of his army; but, to effect this, he was obliged to make himself known to the soldiers immediately around him, for he had not been recognised by them, on account of the darkness and confusion that prevailed. Any attempt to open him a passage proved utterly impracticable; the soldiers therefore raised him on their shoulders, and passed him in that manner from rank to rank, until he reached the rear. Here he explained to the commanding officers, whom he found eager to advance, and impatient of the delay, the embarrassing and dangerous predicament of the leading regiments; ordering them to face the men about, and lead them down the mountain glen, in search of some more practicable pass.

The royalist cazadores engaged with the Pardos del Barlovento, who nearly doubled their numbers, had long maintained an unequal combat, and were at length obliged to retire precipitately into the quebráda, having left three fourths of their comrades on the hard contested field. The firing therefore entirely ceased in that direction; and the shouts of the victorious mulattos, hastening to join the conflict, encouraged the patriots in the same proportion that they dejected the royalists.

A retreat never fails to be dispiriting, under any circumstances; but was rendered peculiarly so to Calzáda's army, as it was now situated. The Spaniards had advanced to the attack, with the confidence inspired by superiority in discipline and numbers, and in the hope of exchanging the hardships and privations they had so fearfully experienced, during their campaign in the Llanos, for the repose and

abundance of quarters in New Grenada. They had, on the contrary, been defeated by the contemned insurgents; and, worse than all, were compelled to leave their comrades still engaged in a hopeless conflict;—the shouts arising from which were still heard distinctly above the protracted roar of musketry, appearing to the retiring army to accuse them of treachery and cowardice.

Santandèr had been one of the foremost in the fight, as was constantly the custom of the patriot chiefs: he now pressed onward to the bridge, to farbid any farther advance of his troops, until daylight should enable them to discover and avoid any ambush that might be prepared for them. With the first dawn, he detached the Pardos del Barlovento, supported by the Zocorro Indians, with orders to follow the course of the ravine on the side which they then occupied, and to oppose any attempts the royalists might make to cross it.

Calzáda, meanwhile, had taken the precantion to station a strong body of troops, which had not been engaged, on the spot which the advanced guard had lately occupied, with orders to cover the rear of the army; and those who were on the Puente del Brujo gradually filed off, following those who had commenced the retreat. The defile, where the battle had been fought, was cumbered with carcasses, over which the survivors, with all the unrelenting animosity peculiar to the *guerra al cuchillo*, grappled with their adversaries, who had at length rushed down the steep banks on all sides, impatient of the tedious mode of extermination they had been so long engaged in.

The Spanish war-cry of—"*Santiago, por el Rey!*"—became fainter and less frequent; until not a voice was heard in reply to the exulting shout of—"*Viva la Patria!*"

Santandèr then put himself at the head of his troops, and led them in pursuit of the retreating army; but, as the Spaniards had some hours advantage of him, he did not overtake them until the sun was high in the heavens. Their rear-guard then manœuvred with such skill and presence of mind,—making a stand in every favorable spot of ground to cover the retreat of their companions,—that the patriot general was baffled in his attempts to force them to a second engagement. He nevertheless continued a close pursuit, which had the effect of deterring Calzáda from renewing his endeavour to pass the ravine; especially as the bugles of the Cumanà mulattos, and the more dissonant warlike music of the Indians, which sounded at intervals, keeping pace with the army, appeared to indicate the presence of a formidable force in possession of the opposite forest.

Calzáda therefore fell back as far as the village of Betolles. From thence he despatched a courier to Morillo at Achaguas, informing him of his failure in the attempt to cross the Cordilléra, and requesting him to send a reinforcement speedily to his assistance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COUNCIL OF WAR—SPANISH HEAD-QUARTERS.

" Fathers! we once again are met in council:
" Cæsar's approach has summoned us together.
" How shall we treat this bold aspiring man?
" Fathers, pronounce your thoughts: are they still fix'd
" To hold it out, and fight it to the last?"

Cato.

THE intelligence of Calzáda's defeat reached Morillo at a moment, when he was so far from being in a condition to afford him the assistance he required, that his own situation was becoming daily more critical.

The Apuríto, a river far broader than the Arauco in the reach which passes the town of Achaguas, is so shallow in consequence of its width, and so full of sand-banks in that part, during the dry season, that nothing drawing more water than a canoe can then approach the town; all launches

and gun-boats being obliged to anchor and unload at the steep banks of El Barrancal, about a mile higher up. One of the above-mentioned class of vessels, having been despatched from San Fernando heavily laden with ammunition for the royalist army, had grounded on a shoal, while on its way to that landing-place, and was discovered in that situation by one of Páez's reconnoitring parties of light cavalry, which were incessantly scouring the country in all directions. Without a moment's hesitation, the Llanéros plunged into the river, and swam their horses to the bank on which the lancha lay. The crew, as well as the small detachment in charge of the stores, seeing plainly that all resistance was fruitless, were compelled to leap overboard, and escape as they best could to the shore; while the Llanéros set fire to the vessel, and returned, as they had advanced, *á nado*. The explosion was distinctly heard in Morillo's cantonment; and was soon accounted for by the arrival of the fugitives, who had barely escaped with their lives.

About the same time, a royalist reconnoitring party, which had ventured to cross the Apurito, and advance as near Bolívar's camp as was consistent with prudence, reported that they had discovered the masts and *tricolor* pendants of three or four Venezuelan gun-boats, which were lying in the deep water below Achaguas, near the Trapíchi de Gamarra. Morillo was well aware, that these would prove a serious annoyance to his army, as soon as the periodical swelling of the river should enable them to approach within gun shot of

the town; especially as his park of artillery had suffered considerable diminution by the upsetting of a raft on the Arăuco, besides the loss of the two pieces lately abandoned in the wood at Caüjeràl, and those rendered useless by their carriages being burned, when Păez set fire to the savanna at Merricúri. He therefore assembled a council of war, composed of his generals and principal field-officers, to deliberate on what was most expedient to be done under these circumstances; and Calzáda's aide-de-camp arrived with his despatches, while the council was debating whether it were better to maintain their position at Achaguas until the following summer, or retire to Caraccas during the rainy season.

The ardent and chivalrous General La Torre spoke with all possible scorn of a retreat; and was supported strenuously by the old Brigadier Ximenez; (better known throughout both armies by the *sobriquet* of—"*El Cari-Cortádo*," from a sabre cut which had disfigured one side of his truly martial Spanish features.) These veterans urged the indelible stigma that a retreat before rebels would cast on the arms of his catholic majesty, Fernando 7mo., and foretold that the insurgents' audacity would increase tenfold, were they permitted for a moment to suppose, that they had been able to repel the royalists from the savannas. They also reminded the council, that the Viceroyalty of New Grenada was already in a highly disturbed state, and that it was a matter of the greatest importance to prevent the arch rebel Simòn Bolívar from forming a junction with Santandèr, from which

he could in no way be effectually impeded, but by retaining possession of Achaguas. Ximenez, in particular, said and swore, that to suffer Bolívar to set his foot in the Entre-Andes would be to the full as dangerous, as to introduce "*Una chispa en la Santa Barbara.*" [28]

The cautious Gallégo Morales, on the contrary, with the calculating and timid Joaquin Navarrete, advised a retreat, at least as far as the town of Calabozo or Sombrero. They ridiculed the idea of Bolívar's being able to march his army into New Grenada; asserting that the season was already too far advanced for any attempt of that kind to be made with his troops, all natives of the warm provinces of Guayana, Cumanà, and Barcelona. They insisted that the melting of the snows alone would detain him so long on the march, that the Paramo of Pisba would either be impassable, or would exact so heavy a toll from his forces, that the survivors would be easily defeated by the royalist General Barrëyra, who was on his march from Bogotà to Tunja, according to the latest advices, and would ere long be reinforced by Calzáda's division.

The arrival of the aide-de-camp being at this moment announced, he was immediately admitted by Morillo's orders, and laid before the council the disastrous issue of the expedition to the Cordilléra. On his retiring, a profound silence prevailed for some time, which was at length interrupted by Morales, who observed that the unwelcome news had suggested to him still more forcible reasons for adhering to his former opinion. He insisted

ıe absolute necessity of falling back on Caracfor the purpose of protecting the line of sea-
; warning his colleagues that any serious
rrection arising among the ports, during the
nce of the army, backed as such a movement
ld not fail to be by the squadron of the insur-
, Admiral Brion, might cut off their communi-
ɔn with Spain, to which alone they were now
look with confidence for reinforcements and
plies.

As his arguments remained unanswered, and
rillo was inclined to the same opinion, it was
eed to evacuate the province of Varínas, and
rch the army into cantonments at Valencia, Vi-
ia, and the valley of Aragoa. The courier, being
led in, was ordered to prepare for his immediate
urn to Betolles, with despatches to Calzada, re-
iring that general to cross the Apuri at Nutrias,
d to proceed to San Carlos by the town of Obiz-
s in upper Varínas.

The chiefs then left the council, and repaired to
eir several quarters, for the purpose of issuing
e usual marching orders to their respective di-
sions. The news having speedily transpired,
e Plaza and parade ground on the banks of the
puríto were crowded with groups of officers,
iticising the measure with the usual freedom of a
ıp. Young La Torre, who well knew his fa-
r's opinion to be in favour of wintering at Acha-
h he heartily coincided,—could not
to his indignation.

shall have to tell, on returning
aign! His catholic majesty's

arms have acquired new lustre, truly, during this visit to the Llanos! Well may that most sententious of squires, Sancho Panza, say—

"Do quieren los Reyes
Que las Leyes?"

therefore I suppose we have nothing left for it but to bridle up and move off. But,—*voto a tal!*—had I any voice in the matter, we should have held out here at least until the spring. Calzada too, it appears, has met with a repulse somewhere in that wild Cordilléra we hear so much of. I understand so, at least, from the lengthened countenance of his aide-de-camp, the Andaluz Ortegui; though he is as impenetrable as a Padre Confesor on the subject."

Here La Torre's sergeant interrupted him by tendering the order-book for his perusal.

"You may take that book away, Rodriguez! I can guess at its contents. We march to-morrow to the Northward, I suppose?"

The sergeant bowed assent, but intimated that there was a particular order, which applied more immediately to "*Su merced Don Pedro.*"

"Let me see then;—here we have it!—'The first squadron of the Lanzéros del Infante will occupy the Plaza of Achaguas for the space of two hours after the rear-guard of the infantry has filed off.'—I could swear, with a safe conscience, that my worthy Tahita dictated that order. He wishes to give me a chance for earning promotion or making a vacancy even to the last moment, I find; but I late in the campaign for me to enter-

tain any hopes of exchanging these epaulettes for *galones.*[30] You may read the orders to the troop, Rodriguez; and desire my servant to look well after my charger to-night."

The sergeant found the troop dismounted, and formed along one side of the neat little country church, which was their temporary barrack. With the attention to punctilio usual in the Spanish service, he first called forward the other sergeants and corporals of the troop, and communicated to them the news, which had been already heard or guessed at by most of them. Nothing, indeed, spreads more rapidly in a camp, than a report of any change of station; for it is welcome to the restless soldier, even though it were to remove him from quarters which he knows by experience to be comfortable, to others by no means to be compared to them in that point of view. There was a general expression of satisfaction among them, on hearing this official confirmation of their reported route from the Llanos, (which they had every reason to dislike,) to the Cerranía, whose very name they were used to associate with ideas of comfortable quarters and plentiful rations.

Rodriguez then turned to the troop, and read to them, with the sonorous voice they had long been accustomed to obey in silence, the orders of the day. When he concluded with that part referring to the morning's duty, which more immediately interested his hearers as forming part of the first squadron, some of the oldest of the *vigotones,* after bespeaking his acquiescence, broke out into shouts of—"*Viva Morillo!*"—"*Viva nuestro Capitan La Torre!*"

Rodriguez listened to them for a while, with a grim look of satisfaction, that relaxed his stern Gallician features; then,—"quenching his familiar smile with an austere regard of controul,"—(as Malvolio has it,)—he waved his hand for silence, and the signal was instantly obeyed. Having marched the front rank three paces forward, he faced it inwards, and proceeded to repeat the Oracion á la Virgen, according to the laudable Spanish custom at sunset, which directs the senior sergeant of every troop or company to pace up and down between the ranks of his comrades, reciting the Rosario;—"*Salud, Maria! Reyna eres del cielo!*" &c.; while, after each repetition, the soldier's responses are heard swelling on the ear, in the solemn lofty-sounding Castilian tongue.

The *retréta* then commenced under Morillo's balcony, and proceeded round the town; the large regimental lantern being carried in the front, as usual, on a pole. The drums and fifes alternated with a full military band, in playing that mixture of lively and plaintive Spanish airs, which appears so well adapted for the lullaby of a camp, and harmonises so strikingly with the vicissitudes of a soldier's chequered life. The troops then thronged towards their respective barracks, and stretched themselves to rest in the moonlight under the corridors, where they soon lost all recollection of the march they were to commence next morning.

The officers, meanwhile, who were not obliged to conform to such early hours, were assembled in their different mess-rooms, which were the *salas* of the principal emigrants' houses. These had been

furnished for the festive use they were at present applied to, by a strange looking mixture of camp stools, arm-chairs covered with gilt and painted leather, and antique sofas, whose gaily embroidered cushions had suffered considerable damage from the boots and spurs of their present occupants. These seats were ranged round long massive tables of dark mahogany, spread partly with the contents of canteens,—partly with plates, cups, &c. of various materials and fashion, which the mess-men and servants had collected from the deserted houses. Many articles of silver, for which the Colonies used formerly to be celebrated, had been picked up by some means or other during the campaigns, and now glittered on the board, mingled with the humbler and less pretending goblets of coco-nut and calabash.

From the same nails which supported against the pannelled wainscoting the framed paintings of saints, decked in all the splendid colouring and gilding of Bogotà and Quito, hung saddles, bridles, and accoutrements of various kinds. The venerable images usually stationed on small tables in corners and recesses,—particularly those of the sturdy looking San Antonio de Padua, and his more solemn visaged companion, San Francisco de Paula,—were each decorated with a helmet or schakos. Behind the doors were piled the servants' muskets, or carbines and sabres; and under the balconies and along the corridors the horses were tied in rows, eating their provender, or resting on the abundant litter the foraging parties had brought in from the neighbouring plantations.

The officers' messes had been once more tolerably well supplied, since the communication with San Fernando was renewed; and the laugh and song went round with the usual glee of a farewell evening in country quarters.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MARCH.—THE ATTACK.—THE DEFEAT.

The fight is ended,—the same sun
Has seen the battle lost and won:
The field is cover'd with dying and dead,
With the valiant who stood, and the coward who fled;
And a gallant salute the trumpets sound,
As the warriors gather from victory round.

The Troubadour.

MORNING found many of the revellers still assembled round their mess tables; and the lively summons of "*La Diana*" warned them, that it was full time to attend to the serious occupations and duties of their profession. As they hastened along the deserted streets, by the dim twilight of an autumnal dawn, they were met at each barrack gate by troops swarming forth, like bees from their hives, with all the vigour and alertness inspired by a sound night's rest, and by the recollection that it

was the day of marching. A camp, which is at all times and under all circumstances an animating scene, becomes peculiarly so on such a morning. Each heart beats lighter under the prospect of a change of place; and the jokes already begin to be bandied to and fro, which are usually permitted during the temporary Saturnalia of the march, by the tacit consent of the officers.

Immediately after the roll-call, the *Generála* was beat by the united drums of the whole army assembled in the Plaza. The regiments, proceeding by different routes to the same place of meeting, formed round the principal square, and in the adjacent streets; and the colours belonging to each corps were brought out by the Abanderádos, under the escort of a small detachment of grenadiers, and received with presented arms and a treble roll on the drums. Lastly, Morillo appeared on horseback in the middle of the Plaza, surrounded by his staff. He gave the word of command, and the troops filed off by the road to San Fernando, in quick time; each band, as it passed the general, striking up the merry *pazo redobládo*.

The cavalry had previously marched forward at a trot, to pass the Apúri first, and thereby to avoid the delay they would have been exposed to had they followed the infantry; and, when the last stragglers disappeared, a squadron of lancers cantered lightly into the square, led by La Torre, who commanded the detachment as captain of the first troop. Having halted his men in front of the church, he was beckoned forward by Morillo, who had still kept his station there waiting for his

arrival. The general observed that, as the army was to cross the Apúri immediately on reaching San Fernando, it was desirable for it to be protected against any annoyance by the straggling parties of insurgent cavalry, which would not fail, he said, to enter Achaguas on discovering the retreat, and would probably harass the rear, if not prevented. He directed Don Pedro to remain four hours in possession of the Plaza, instead of two, as had been set down in general orders; and then to retreat slowly, halting occasionally on any open spot of ground, so as to give the army ample time to cross the river.

Morillo then rode off; and La Torre having directed a sentry to be posted at the entrance of the narrow lane, leading by the corral to the plantations, ordered the squadron to dismount. The officers gave their horses in charge to their covering files, and advanced into the centre of the square, where cigars were produced, handed round, and lighted.

A prominent character in the group of smokers was the Captain of the second troop, a swarthy hard-featured Pastuzo, by name Don Ramon Bamondez. He had been admitted into the regiment on the recommendation of the Viceroy Samano, principally on account of his being a native of Pasto, [31]—that city *par excellence* loyal,—which furnished more volunteers to the royalist standard, during the war, than any other part of Colombia; or perhaps, for its size, of all South America. The Spanish officers, although obliged to tolerate these royalist Criollos as associates, could never

feel very cordially disposed towards them as companions. They were indeed despised by the most liberal of their European comrades, for their avowed hostility to their conntrymen; and the *Godos Hidalgos* universally considered it as the height of presumption in *Triguenos*, (as they styled these men of Ind), to mix on terms of equality with white men.

Those creole-royalists, who were conscious of being "misliked for their complexion," generally endeavoured to disguise from others, and—what was far more difficult,—from themselves, this sense of inferiority, by an affectation of the closest familiarity with Europeans of equal rank in the king's service. This was invariably met by the Spanish officers with a cautious distant ceremony. While they *tutéo'd*[32] each other as *vos*, or *camarada*, they took especial care to address all such Crioles as were in any degree intrusive, by the punctilious title of "Señor Don Fulano, or Perenzejo, &c."

Bamondez addressed La Torre, to his great annoyance, by the familiar term, *Amigo;* and enquired whether Morillo had communicated to him any fresh orders for the squadron during the short conversation he had just held with him. Don Pedro answered him briefly; and turning immediately to a young European lieutenant of his own troop, who had been lately promoted to fill the vacancy which Castro occasioned, entered into discussion of the comparative merits of the troop horses, or some equally interesting theme. This engaged his attention until the corporal, whose duty it was to attend to the sentries' relief, returned

from his rounds, and reported that the lancer stationed at the corral had observed several of the enemy's cavalry reconnoitring on the edge of the wood. La Torre himself questioned the man who had just been relieved; and learned that about ten horsemen, whom he well knew to belong to Páez's Guardia de Honor, by the black bannerols to their lances, had advanced as far as the clump of Moríchi palms, within musket shot of the corral, where they had halted for a while, and retired slowly into the wood.

"Señores Oficiales, to your posts!" said La Torre.—"*Lanzéros! preparense á montar! monten!*" Scarcely had the bustle of preparation subsided into the steadiness and stillness of a well-disciplined body of men, in expectation of an attack, when the report of a pistol was heard, followed by the clattering of a horse's hoofs in rapid approach.

"Our sentry is driven in!" muttered the veteran sergeant Rodriguez, who was stationed on the right of the line, directly in the rear of his captain; "I could swear, by the sound of the *herradúras*, that it is no Llanéro's horse."

The lancer entered the Plaza at full speed, but reined up as he approached the squadron; and as he passed La Torre on his way to the rear, he merely observed in a low voice, with true Castilia brevity and sang-froid,—"*Ya vienen!*"

"*Firmes, muchachos! Calan lanzas!*" was the only answer; and at the word

"Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
"The serried grove of lances brown
"At once lay levelled low."

The trampling of a heavy column of horse was distinctly heard advancing. It divided, on reaching the open ground about the church: one detachment turning off to the left, for the purpose of entering the Plaza at the corner near the Cura's house, while the other kept straight forward by the church. Both parties showed themselves at the same moment, with loud and enthusiastic vivas, which were re-echoed at sight of the Spaniards drawn up to receive them.

Before they had time to join, La Torre called loudly on Bamonde to lead his troop against that party of insurgent cavalry which was nearest to him; and wheeling his own troop to the right, he led them, *sacre mahr*, against the enemy on his side of the square. In all cases where cavalry charges cavalry, that body which is stationary must inevitably suffer most severely; and, in the present instance, the shock of La Torre's charge nearly overthrew the line against which it was directed. Most of the swordsmen were carried by the impetuosity of their chargers completely through the wide spaces left between the patriot files for the uninterrupted manœuvrement of their horses; and both sides becoming confusedly mingled together, they slung their horses, as if by mutual consent, and drawing their sabres, commenced a furious melée.

Meanwhile, the second troop, which had of course been opposed to the right of the patriot line, had not been brought to the charge by Bamonde so promptly as the exigence of the case required. He was met half-way by the party he had been directed to attack, consisting of the élite of La Guardia de

Honor, headed by Päez in person. The effect of the rencontre was decidedly in favour of the patriots. Don Ramon, among many other royalists, was borne from his saddle by a lance thrust; and his men, after a fruitless attempt at rallying, galloped off by the road to San Fernando, warmly pursued by most of the Guardia.

Päez, whose example was followed by Carvajàl and some of his usual attendants, threw aside his lance, and spurred, sabre in hand, to the opposite side of the square, where the conflict still raged with undiminished fury. It happened that the troop commanded by Slivestre Gomez was one of those engaged on this side; and the two former friends, Castro and La Torre, repeatedly met in the confusion of the mêleé. They had recognised each other, but invariably separated as soon as their sabres crossed, and sought out other antagonists. On the arrival of the reinforcement which followed Päez, the scale was quickly turned against the royalists, who, nevertheless, wearied by their previous exertions, and hemmed in on every side, fought on through mere despair of receiving quarter. Those Llanéros, who had most wrongs to revenge, pressed eagerly forward to share in the massacre, which was viewed with exultation and applause, even by those who took no active part in it;—such was the merciless nature of the Guerra a la Muerte.

Andres Castro watched, with painful interest, the gallant defence still made by his former friend and comrade, La Torre, who, assisted by his covering sergeant Rodriguez, had cut his way through

prostrate body of the sergeant, rolled headlong on the ground. Perrucho Goicoumar was one of those who had desisted from the attack at Piem's command, and had been detained by curiosity near

his chief: he dismounted eagerly, and plunged his *machete* into the fallen Spaniard, before he could be withheld.

Achaguas was once more in possession of the Llanéros. After a short rest from the fatigues of the morning, they prepared an ample trench in the cemetry behind the church, and committed to one common grave those who had fallen on both sides. They next directed their attention to the clearing the town of all traces of having been the enemy's quarters, and preparing houses for the reception of Bolívar and such other chiefs as they had reason to suppose would speedily arrive. By the hour of evening Oracion, the Plaza and principal streets had been swept, with that attention to neatness which distinguishes most small towns in the interior of the country; and the stains of the recent conflict had been carefully removed from the walls of the church.

A party of the Guardia, which had been detached to reconnoitre the rear of the enemy, now returned, and reported that the Spaniards had all crossed the Apúri. Pãez then ordered out a small escort, under the command of Silvestre Gomez, with directions to proceed to Cunavichi, and bring back with them as many of the emigrant families as might be in readiness to accompany them. The presence of Don Manuel Quadras, the Cura of Guadualito, was the more earnestly desired, that, in consequence of all insurgent towns lying under the Church's ban, no priest had been appointed to Achaguas since the death of the late Cura.

The Llanéros then marched out into the savanna, where they bivouacked for the night ;—preferring, as usual, the cool open plain far beyond any shelter, however commodious, that was to be found beneath a roof.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CONCLUSION.

My pen is at the bottom of a page,
Which being finish'd, here the story ends;
'Tis to be wished it had been sooner done,
But stories somehow lengthen, when begun.

Beppo.

THE news of the Spaniards having evacuated Achaguas, and finally retired from the savannas of Varínas, reached the cantonments of the patriot infantry, on the evening of the day, in which the rear-guard of the royalist cavalry had been cut off in the Plaza of Achaguas. In his exultation at the favorable manner in which the campaign had terminated, Bolívar was not forgetful of the hardships and privations that had been so long and so patiently endured by the emigrants at Cunavíchi. In answer to Páez's invitation to himself and his army to take up their quarters in the capital of the Llanos, he declared his unwillingness to incommode the inhabitants of Achaguas by the presence of troops no way connected with them. He expressed his determination to winter among the small and almost

deserted villages in the upper plains, where the few remaining inhabitants would be rather benefitted than otherwise, by having soldiers stationed among them.

The emigrants, on receiving the pleasing intelligence of their being at length permitted to return to their respective habitations, unanimously agreed not to separate, until they had all visited Achaguas, and personally paid their grateful acknowledgments to the Chief of the Llanos, for his kind attention to their safety, and chivalrous defence of their native land. When Pãez was made acquainted with their intention, he gave permission to one Llanéro belonging to each family, (as on a former occasion,) to assist in the removal of his relations and friends from their place of temporary banishment. Those who remained at Achaguas busied themselves in preparing the long deserted houses for their reception, and in erecting ranchos along the banks of the river, and in the neighbouring wood, for the accommodation of such families as might not otherwise find room. At the entrance of the town, over the lane leading to the savanna, was raised a sort of triumphal arch, formed of bambu and pliant bejuco, that was covered with branches of the Moríchi palm, and garlands of sweet-citron boughs.

As the caravan of emigrants was numerous, and Pãez had given strict orders to the escort not to hurry their march, a week elapsed before they had crossed the Arãuco at Caujaral. They were met in the savanna, a few leagues from Achaguas, by the whole of the cavalry, who conducted them into town in triumph. Rangèl's carbineers fired off their *arcabuces* along the road, as they caracoled

round the joyous caravan; and the long forgotten bells once more pealed merrily from the *campanario*, where the old sacristan was reinstated in all the pomp and decent pride of village office.

A general shout of joy burst from the crowd assembled in the Plaza, on seeing the venerable form of the Cura appear in the same balcony, from which they had been so often addressed by his lamented predecessor. When silence was obtained, he briefly congratulated the emigrants on their return from the wilds to the habitations of men; enjoining them to assemble that evening, in the same place, to unite with him in the Rosario de la Virgen, in token of their gratitude. Päez, who stood next to Don Manuel Quadras, was also greeted with vehement and enthusiastic cheers; which were repeated, on his acquainting them, that they would find bullocks, enough for all, killed at the corral by his directions.

The inhabitants of the town then dispersed to their several homes, taking with them their fellow emigrants, all of whom met with some sort of accommodation. Notwithstanding their exultation at their return, it was impossible totally to repress the lamentations of the *duenas de casa*, on observing the ill usage their houses had met with from the royalists, and the total disappearance of many long cherished and highly valued articles of furniture. This did not, however, prevent them from heartily enjoying the feast which Päez's forethought had provided for them; and a more numerous party, than assembled that evening at the Oracion, had

never before been witnessed in the Plaza of Achaguas.

Päez had received a hint of the intended marriage of his young volunteer Castro, from some one of those particular friends who were in the secret. As he was always pleased with an opportunity of promoting the happiness of a people whom he truly loved, he exerted his influence, which was all-powerful with Silvestre Gomez, that the nuptials might be celebrated before the emigrants should disperse; offering himself, at the same time, as *padrino* to the bride. This honour was of course thankfully accepted; and, as the will of their parents and seniors was a law to the younger branches of all Llanéro families, no dissatisfaction was openly expressed,—whatever might have been felt,—either by Andres or his cousin Juanita, on its being announced to them, that the next day, immediately after the celebration of the Misa de Gracias, was fixed on for their union.

The bridegroom was shortly after reinstated by Päez in the possession of the land near San Fernando, which had been formerly held by his father, Don Toribio Castro, Andres continued to distinguish himself under the banner of the Llanéro Chief, until freedom and independence was ultimately secured to his native country, at the decisive victory of Carabóbo. He then laid aside the lance; and returned to enjoy the blessings of peace in the Savannas of Varínas.

NOTES

TO THE

SAVANNAS OF VARINAS.

Note 1, p. 12.

Päez's Llanéros made prisoners of some of these Spanish pioneers, at the pass of Nutrias, near Mantecal, in the Winter of 1817. Contrary to their usual practice, they spared their lives; and being questioned by Päez why they had discontinued the *guerra á la muerte*, answered that their conscience would not permit them to put Capuchin friars to death.

Note 2, p. 16.

Chocúto is a term of reproach by which the Spaniards, and royalists in general, used to designate the insurgents or patriots. The word literally signifies *cropped* or *docked*, and is commonly applied in that sense to a horse; but it was used in allusion to the closeness with which most Creoles composing the first irregular independent corps cut their hair. It is remarkable, as a coincidence, that the royalists in Cromwell's time applied the term *round heads* to their opponents; and, still later, the sobriquet of *croppies* has been derived from a similar fashion.

Note 3, p. 35.

Cháquete ;—back-gammon.

Note 4, p. 49.

The following is an imitation of the "Tonadilla triste."

"Melancholy! why so slow
"Thy venom'd dart?
"Why delays the stroke of woe
"To rend my heart?
"Sweeter far were life's last close,
"And dying groan,
"Than thus to drag a load of woes,
"Unpitied, on!

"When the fatal hour is come,
"Haste thee before
"The silent mansion of the tomb
"Shall close its door:
"Take thy portrait!—next my heart,
"With jealous care,
"Still I've worn it—then depart,
"And breathe a pray'r!
"I bear not with me to the tomb
"Relics which have seal'd my doom!"

Note 5, p. 62.

The motto of the celebrated *Andres el herréro*, or Andrew the Smith, (usually called Andrea Ferrára,) may be thus rendered.

"Draw me not without a cause!
"Sheath me not without applause!"

NOTE 6, p. 66.

The Llanéro song here quoted runs thus:

"De los generales qual es el valiente?"
"Mi General Päez con toda su gente."
"De los Generales qual es il mejor?"
"Mi Gen'ral Josè con su Guardia de Honor."

NOTE 7, p. 73.

The unsheltered passes of the Andes, and of several branches of the Cordilléra are termed *Paramos*.

NOTE 8, p. 108.

The following is a translation of the Buenos-Ayrean national song.

"Immortals! hear the sacred strains
"Which hail our country's liberty!
"List to the sound of bursting chains,
"And the shouts of those who dare be free!
"A land of hope and young renown
"Is added to the Western world;
"On her brows a laurel crown,
"And at her feet a *Lion* hurled.
"May the laurels of freedom eternally bloom!
"May they crown us with glory!—or wave o'er our tomb!"

NOTE 9, p. 109.

The "Song of the Savannas" may be thus rendered into English; preserving, as nearly as possible, the irregular measure and cadence.

"Should scoffers laugh to scorn the half-clad troops of liberty;—
("Oh! take the field, and scorn to yield, with sabre and with lance!)

"Say,—'Haughty Spain let nought remain to the land of Slavery.'
("Come, join the fray and win the day;—Colombia's sons advance!")
"Come, Chapetónes! come, and die!
"Leave Spain in hopeless phrenesy!

"The Godos' might has banish'd right and justice from the land;
("Oh! take, &c.)
"Their laws for gold were bought and sold at the Audience's command.
("Come, join, &c.)
"Come, Chapetónes! come, and die!
"Leave Spain in hopeless phrenesy!"

"Tyrants all in turn must fall, at Destiny's decree;
("Oh! take, &c.)
"Then, heart and hand united stand in the ranks of liberty!
("Come, join, &c.)
"Come, Chapetónes! come, and die!
"Leave Spain in hopeless phrenesy!"

NOTE 10, p. 112.

Et Tio Porsupuesto was a *sobriquet*, by which Bolívar was better known, perhaps, in the earlier patriot armies, than by any other. It was given him originally by Päez, in allusion to a habit the Libertadór had acquired of answering "*porsupuesto!*"—"of course!"—to every suggestion that was made him; especially if he did not altogether coincide in opinion with his adviser, and was unwilling to offend him.

NOTE 11, p. 113.

At the Village of Chiquinquirà, in New Grenada, is [illegible] miraculous painting representing the Virgin, said

to have been designed by San Luque, and brought down by him from heaven. It is held in as high repute, in Venezuela and Cundinamarca, as the images of Zaragoza and Loretto are in their respective countries: and any oath taken "by our lady of Chiquinquirà" is usually kept most scrupulously.

NOTE 12, p. 138.

The belief in *duendes*, or fairies, is very prevalent throughout South America; particularly in Peru and Chile.

NOTE 13, p. 155.

The following is an imitation of the *Marri-Marri*, or Orinoco canoe song.

"Márrimárri! why so slow,
"Brethren of the lance and bow?
"Let each Indian strain his oar;—
"The Chieftain seeks Varínas' shore.

"On the bank his lancers stand,
"Waiting Päez's lov'd command:
"He shall lead them on to fame;
"Ever honour'd be his name.

"Márrimárri! brothers row;
"Fear not tho' *chuvascos* blow:
"Through mid-day heat and ev'ning dew,
"Brothers! speed the light canoe."

NOTE 14, p. 159.

Canaléte is the provincial term for a paddle.

NOTE 15, p. 196.

In many parts of South America,—particularly in lower Varínas,—the cows are so wild and untameable, that

it is usual to trice them up by the throat to a *horcon*, or the forked branch of a tree, so as to induce temporary strangulation, before they will give down any milk.

Note 16, p. 199.

Horses that are *mansos á la rienda*, (broke to the rein,) are not so commonly met with, and bear a much higher price in Varínas and other parts of the country, than those only broke to the *cabestro*, or halter. They are in request for hunters and chargers.

Note 17, p. 213.

As his horse is the most valuable object in a Llanéro's estimation, he usually names it as his wager;—"*Apuesto mi cavallo!*"—"I bet my horse!"—and swears by it;—"*Que me cayga muerto mi mejor cavallo, si, &c.*"—"May my best horse drop dead, if &c.!"

Note 18, p. 218.

The following is a translation of the "Song of the Libertadór."

"Hail, Bolívar! glorious name;—
"Champion still of liberty:
"Stern Cevallos dreads thy fame;
"Aräuré's plains are freed by thee.

"Thrice triumphant hast thou come,
"Bolívar! to thy native home:
"Thrice ten times thine arm of might
"Has forced the barb'rous Goth to flight.

"The banner of imperious Spain,
"Trampled on th' ensanguin'd plain,
seen thy flag of brilliant dies,
Tricolòr of freedom, rise.

" Venezuela's patriot band
" Has joined Grenáda, heart and hand;
" And, united, rent in twain
" Fell Oppression's galling chain.

" Hail, Bolívar! glorious name;—
" Champion still of liberty:
" Stern Cevallos dreads thy fame;
" Aräuré's plains are freed by thee."

NOTE 19, p. 218.

Translation of the "Song of the Guard;" commonly called "*La Colombiána.*"

" Let the lovers of freedom first learn to obey
" The law that *La Guardia* has sworn to this day;—
" 'Tis to hate ev'ry tyrant; to burst ev'ry chain;
" And to scoff at the merciless despot of Spain.

CHORUS.

" Then on! comrades, on! let us rush to the fight;
" Let the sons of Varínas advance in their might!
" And, as from our lances th' invaders shall fly,
" Let Liberty! Liberty! still be our cry.

" Can we hope for redress from a Monarch, whose word
" Is hollow and false as the shell of the gourd?
" We have trusted him long:—his too credulous land
" Has met with but ruin and shame at his hand.

CHORUS.

" Then on! comrades, on!" &c.

NOTE 20, p. 220.

Translation of the Llanéras song.

" Bolívar, my General! grant, by thy life!
" That one of thy warriors may take me to wife.
" Vaya! &c.

" Bolívar, my Chieftain ! the roseate dye
" Of thy lip, like the bright *clavel*, dazzles the eye.
" Vaya ! &c.

" Bolívar, my Chieftain ! thy steed through the fight
" Bears thee on, like the lightning;—as swift and as bright.
" Vaya ! &c.
" Bolívar, my Chieftain ! the motto is plain
" Engrav'd on thy sabre;—'Destruction to Spain !'
" Vaya ! &c.

" The bullets that fly from the Chapeton's line
" We bruise, round our patriot tresses to twine.
" Vaya ! &c.
" Our gallant defenders are rushing to arms :
" May the heavens restore them once more to our arms !
" Vaya ! &c."

NOTE 21, p. 221.

Translation of the " Soldier's Farewell."

" I hear the sound of the hollow drums, and bugles' shrilly bray :
" Too well I know from her I love they hurry me away.
" My days will pass in misery, but still I'll think on thee ;
" Whilst thou, perhaps, wilt scorn, my love ! to waste a thought on me !

" Again th' unwelcome sound I hear, and mournfully I sigh,
" To think how swift the parting hour from thee, my love ! draws nigh :
" [illegible]r valour's meed, can happiness renew,
" [illegible]nistress of my heart, no more shalt

" But see my country's banners wave, and I must follow far:
" A long farewell to thee, my love! thy soldier seeks the war.
" My days will pass in misery, but still I'll think on thee;
" Whilst thou, perhaps, wilt scorn, my love! to waste a thought on me."

NOTE 22, p. 225.

The *picána*, or goad used in South America, is a formidable weapon resembling a lance, with a sharp iron point nearly an inch long.

NOTE 23, p. 227.

" *El Chambéco*" is the merry but mischievous fiend of the Savannas; answering, in some respects, to the " *Robin Goodfellow*" of our ancestors: and believed, by the Llanéros of Varínas, to delight in playing malicious pranks on horses and cattle.

NOTE 24, p. 239.

La Trilla is a circular enclosure used for trampling out the corn. The floor is spread with grain in the straw, and horses and bullocks are driven round over it at a gallop.

NOTE 25, p. 251.

" *Hay sal al fondo*;"—" There is salt at the bottom."

NOTE 26, p. 259.

The proverb,—

" *Desnudo naci, desnudo me hallo:*
" *Ni pierdo, ni gano*;"

ay be rendered,—

" Naked was I born, naked I remain:
" Nothing do I lose, nothing do I gain."

NOTE 27, p. 276.

The quotation,—

" *Vinó un Usía,*
" *Y se llevò la flor que mas quería !*"

" A lordly suitor came,
" And stole the flower which most I prized !"

is taken from a favourite Venezuelan song of the early revolutionary times, when first Spanish titles, such as *Usía* and *Voezencia*, began to be contemned.

NOTE 28, p. 316.

" *Una chispa en la Santa Barbara ;*"—" A spark in the powder magazine."—A provincial proverb. An image of Santa Barbara is hung in every Spanish magazine, on shore or afloat ; for that saint is believed peculiarly to protect her votaries from lightning and conflagration. The place itself takes its name, in common parlance, from the saint, who is the patroness of gunners.

NOTE 29, p. 318.

" *Do quieren los Reyes,*
" *Asi van las Leyes !*"

" As Kings desire,
" So Laws require !"

NOTE 30, p. 319.

Epaulettes are worn in the Spanish service, by the junior ranks in the army, as far as captains inclusive ; those above are distinguished by *galones*, or stripes of gold cuffs.

NOTE 31, p. 325.

The natives of Pasto form the theme of many a South American song, in which allusion is made to their hostility to La Patria: as,

" *El infame, indecente Pastúzo,*
" *Opuesto a la libertad,*" *&c.*

NOTE 32, p. 326.

Tutéar,—to *thou*;—is used to denote familiarity, and sometimes superiority. The changing *tu* for *usted*, is a never failing symptom of incipient coldness; and is thus alluded to in a tonadilla of Bogotà.

" Crescen las amistades,
" Y el amor sube;
" Se acaban los *ustedes*,
" Entran los *túes*;—
" Pero en rinendo,
" Vuelven, como al principio,
" Los cumplimentos."

Which may be thus rendered:

" When friendship first to love gives way,
" No longer formal *You* we say,
" But soft, endearing, *Thou*:
" But mark, when love is on the wane,
" How compliments resume their reign;
" All's cold and formal now."

FINIS.

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